

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Kentwood

App Ref: 210280/HOU

Address: 15 The Cedars, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6JW

Proposals: Conversion of double garage to create additional living space and a new first floor front extension over existing garage

Case Officer: Julie Williams

Date received (valid from): 23 February 2021 Target Decision date: 21 May 2021 and extended to 25 June to allow tree information to be provided

PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is as described above. The garage sits at right angles to the main house creating an L shape block. The site is well screened by trees. The original proposal included a higher and gable ended roof and raised concerns for adjacent trees. Amended plans have been provided with an arboricultural methods statement to address concerns.



Photo



Existing front



Proposed front

Plans:

287-AA-01 Rev B Existing plans and elevations and location plan

287-A1-02 Rev C floor plans, elevations and block plan

Arboricultural Method Statement for 15 The Cedars Ref. PB/AMS-21/16.06 prepared by Urban Tree Experts dated 23 June 2021

The above amended plans received on 8th June 2021.

CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter and site notice displayed.

14 The Cedars, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG31 6JW

16 The Cedars, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6JW

11 The Cedars, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6JW

6 Armour Hill, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6JS

7 Armour Hill, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6JS

No letters of representation have been received.

Natural Environment Team

Comments on original plans.

This site is subject to TPO 7/06 covering the large Cedar tree growing in the front garden, close to the existing garage.

I note the application form states there are no trees within falling distance from the proposed development, which is incorrect. The TPO Cedar tree's trunk is located within 6 metres of the garage, as are at least 2 other trees growing on the boundary with no.11.

As per our validation checklist, all trees growing within falling distance of the proposed development must be accurately plotted on a plan showing trunk location, root protection area and crown extent. Furthermore, when the proposed development overlaps any of the above, an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and, if deemed so by the AIA, an Arboricultural Method Statement and a Tree Protection Plan must be submitted before decisive comments can be made.

With reference to the **Existing Floor Plans and Elevations Drg. No. 287-A1-00** and **Proposed Floor Plans and Elevations Drg. No. 287 A1-02-A** both dated 18.02.2021, I note the following:

The existing trees are only indicatively shown on the plans and there are inconsistencies with regards to their location between existing elevations and proposed elevations drawings. Note the below attached annotated photo, showing the trees are drawn further away from the building on the proposed drawing compared with their location on the existing drawing.

When the existing drawings are considered, it is clear the crowns will be pruned to enable development, which is undesirable. I await the AIA to clarify the extent of the works before decisive comments can be made.

The Proposed Ground Floor plan indicates provision for an additional parking space between the garage and the line of trees (including the TPO Cedar tree), which is unacceptable. It is very likely the Root Protection Area of the trees extend up to the garage and any ground works or soil compaction in this space will prove detrimental to the trees' health. As the Cedar is a valuable tree, protected by a TPO, this type of changes within its RPA are not acceptable. Amended plans must be submitted that show this parking provision removed.

In addition, the first floor extension over the garage to create a 5th bedroom includes a large window facing the aforementioned trees (presumably to ensure good light levels). As such, it is highly likely that following construction, there would be pressure to prune or remove these trees, including the TPO Cedar, due to proximity and shading; a position which must be avoided. The documents provided so far do not acknowledge tree constraints and fail to demonstrate no harm to existing trees and TPO Cedar tree. Without further submissions of the requested Arb documents and amendments, this application does not meet the natural environment criteria and would not be supported.

Amended plans and an arboricultural assessment were provided and the Natural Environment team's comments on these were:

Previous natural environment comments acknowledged the proposal is appropriate, thus the application is supported in terms of trees, but requested that tree protection details (AMS) are secured via condition.

In response, the applicant amended the Arboricultural Method Statement Ref. PB/AMS-21/16.06 (revision dated 23 June 2021), to which the following are noted:

The schedule of required tree works is now complete, i.e. includes both the Cedar tree and the ornamental Cherry, and it provisions that these works are carried out by a 'suitably competent person' and 'at no time must the trees be pruned by the construction contractors', which is positive.

Ground protection specifications, which we pointed as missing in the previous version of the AMS, have now been provided at Section 6.2 Ground Protection Measures, Section 7 Site specific precautions and mitigation, Appendix 1 Tree Protection Plan and Appendix 4 Temporary Ground Protection of the above mentioned AMS.

I note that 7.6 of the AMS states that: The existing hard surfaced driveway and carparking area and paved front pathways are to be retained as existing, with no proposed changes.

In conclusion, tree retention and protection details are complete, and a pre-commencement condition is no longer necessary. Instead please attach condition L7A in order to secure compliance with the amended AMS:

Transport

The proposed extension will result in the loss of parking within the double garage to provide accommodation ancillary to the main dwelling and therefore the loss of a parking space. In accordance with the Councils current standards a 3+ property in Zone 3 is required to provide 2 off road parking spaces. No plans have been submitted illustrating the existing or proposed parking provision.

There are no Transport objections to this application as alternative off street is being provided on the front drive therefore proposed provision is in accordance with the Councils current Parking Standards.

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 and 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)

EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland)

H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

SPG/SPD

- A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

Assessment

With the change to the design of the extended garage, which is better in appearance and safeguards the nearest trees the development is found to be an acceptable addition to the character or appearance of the site or its surroundings and would not have a detrimental impact on the original building or neighbouring properties. As such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland), CC8 (Safeguarding amenity) and H8 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Councils Supplementary Planning Guidance "A Design Guide to House Extensions" (2003).

RECOMMENDATION:

Grant