

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham

App Ref: 210817/HOU

Address: 28 Rufus Isaacs Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 6DD

Proposals: Garage conversion and proposed front porch extension

Case Officer: Mr Jonathan Markwell

Applicant: Mr Mirza

Date received (valid from): 24 May 2021

Target Decision date: 19 July 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

The application relates to a two-storey semi-detached property dwelling located on the southern side of Rufus Isaacs Road, off Henley Road in Caversham. The property is one of a pair with its neighbour (No. 30 to the west). There are a number of paired semi-detached properties similar in style to the host dwelling within the road, together with a number of individually designed detached dwellings. The neighbouring property to the east is a detached property, set slightly forward of the host dwelling in its neighbouring plot. On the approach to the application site the land levels fall north to south. The site is within an air quality management area and smoke control zone. The character of the wider area is predominantly residential. The property is not listed, nor located within a conservation area.

The Covid pandemic meant an accompanied officer site visit was not possible at this time, but an unaccompanied visit from public vantage points was undertaken (see photographs within the report). Given the nature of the proposals, an unaccompanied site visit was sufficient in this instance to assess the proposals.





Officer site photographs of the application site property during an unaccompanied site visit on 09/06/2021.



Aerial view looking south

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks permission for the erection of a proposed front porch extension and a garage conversion.

The proposed porch is marginally set in and set back from both the existing front and side elevations of the property and is 1.775m in both width and depth. It is 2.3m in height to eaves height, rising to 3.3m with the single pitched roof similar in profile to that which exists at present. The porch includes a door and window on the front elevation.

The garage conversion will involve the removal of the existing garage door and provision of a brick wall with double glazed UPVC window in its place. There is no change to the roof profile or footprint of the building at this point.

The proposals also show the introduction of a window in the side (west-facing) elevation at ground floor level, set back 1.3m from the existing front building line, to provide an opening for the intended lounge. Both the elevation and floor plan specify this as an obscured window.

Plans considered:

~~QS-01 Location Plan~~

~~QS-02 Site Plan~~

~~As received 20/05/2021~~

~~QS-03 Rev A Existing Floor Plan & Elevation~~

~~QS-04 Rev A Proposed Floor Plan & Elevation~~

~~As received 24/04/2021~~

QS-01 Rev A Location Plan

QS-02 Rev A Site Plan

QS-04 Rev A Existing Side Elevation, Ground Floor Plan & Front Elevation

QS-04 Rev A Proposed Side Elevation, Ground Floor Plan & Front Elevation

As received 24/06/2021

Revised plans were submitted during the course of the application after some inconsistencies were identified on the originally submitted plans:

- The originally submitted existing floor plan indicated that the downstairs WC was set back slightly from the garage, but the unaccompanied site visit confirmed they were in line with one another. The existing floor plan was updated accordingly.
- The originally submitted proposed floor plan showed the WC being set back from the proposed utility room and the proposed porch being set back again from the WC. However, the roof plan showed one continuous roof form and the site plan showed only the porch being set back. Revised plans were submitted to show the single step in as part of the proposed porch.
- The unaccompanied officer site visit showed that three rooflights were positioned on the front roofslope, but these were not shown on the originally submitted existing or proposed elevation plans. Revised plans depicting these were submitted.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application site - none.

Nearby sites:

1 Rufus Isaacs Road

141091 - Single storey side extension and garage conversion. Granted 29/8/14.

6 Rufus Isaacs Road

081047 - Single storey front and rear extensions. Granted 27/3/2008.

7 Rufus Isaacs Road

061329 - Front Porch. Granted 6/3/2007.

140879 - Single storey front, side and rear extension. Granted 31/7/2014.

15 Rufus Isaacs Road

051163 - Conversion of garage to enlarge living room. Granted 21/9/2005.

17 Rufus Isaacs Road

110326 - Conversion of garage to habitable room. Granted 6/6/2011.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Public consultation - The following addresses were consulted by letter.

26 & 30 Rufus Isaacs Road
11 & 13 South View Avenue

4.2 The applicant provided photographic evidence that a site notice had been erected on 11/06/2021, specifying that comments should be received by 01/07/2021 (erroneously, as it should have stated 02/07/2021). One objection was received, summarised as follows:

- a) Blockage/loss of light to a ground floor side elevation window at No. 26, which serves a kitchen - ask that the existing level of natural light is not lost*.
- b) Ask that the proposal does not result in outlook being reduced to “staring out at a brick wall” from the neighbouring ground floor side elevation kitchen window.
- c) Any window directly facing No. 26 should be frosted or located to avoid direct overlooking.
- d) Building works should not take place at unreasonable hours.

* In conversation with the case officer on 01/07/2021 the objector confirmed verbally that the kitchen room was served by two windows, one on the front elevation of the property and the other on the side elevation.

Officer response: a) & b) see appraisal. c) the elevation and floor plan submitted have specified that this will be an obscured window, with the ‘development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans’ condition ensuring that occurs in practice. d) An informative will be included on the decision notice reminding the applicant of hours of works permitted under Environmental Health legislation.

4.3 Transport Development Control

The loss of the garage will result in the loss of a parking space. In accordance with the Council’s current Parking Standards and Design SPD 2 off road parking spaces should be provided. 2 parking spaces has been illustrated on the submitted Site Plan.

There are no Transport objections to this application, subject to the condition and informative stated below:

DC1 VEHICLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED)
IF3 Highways

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
H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-related matters

SPG/SPD

- A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG 2021
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

6. APPRAISAL

H9 states: An extension to a house will be acceptable where it:

- A. Respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design;

To assess this, the following has been considered - would the proposal:

- detract from the appearance of the original building through the use of ill-matching materials and by not fitting in with the design, scale and proportions of the original building; NO - the proposed materials will align with the existing property, as confirmed by a 'matching materials' compliance planning condition. The existing pair of semi-detached properties would not be significantly harmed by the relatively minor works proposed, which are similar in nature to other works undertaken in the past on Rufus Isaacs Road (see relevant history above and photograph below)



Example of a garage conversion undertaken elsewhere on Rufus Isaacs Road (09/06/2021).

- reduce the amount of usable amenity space for the property to an unacceptable degree; NO
- require the loss of trees in the garden or put significant trees at risk; NO

B. Respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line; Respects neighbour's amenities and does not present a large blank façade to public areas.

To assess this, the following has been considered - would the proposal:

- significantly reduce the amount of daylight and sunlight enjoyed by neighbouring properties; NO - the footprint of the proposed extension is limited. Whilst it is acknowledged (confirmed by the representation received) that an existing side (west) elevation kitchen window exists on the neighbouring property facing the host property, the existing boundary treatment and gates between the two properties, together with the neighbour confirming via a telephone conversation with the case officer on 01/07/2021 that the kitchen was dual aspect (with a further window on the front elevation), means the overall impact is not considered to be significantly harmful. Moreover, the set in of the proposed extension off the side building line and 1m distance to the boundary also assists in mitigating the impact. Together these factors mean that whilst the proposed porch extension would be likely to reduce existing day/sunlight levels to this window/room, the reduction is not considered to be significant, not causing any significant loss of amenity to warrant a sustainable reason for refusal of the application.
- invade the privacy of neighbouring properties through overlooking from windows or balconies; NO - the proposal includes a new side facing window at ground floor level; the applicant has specified on the plan and elevation that this shall be obscured and therefore, by virtue of the 'carry out the development in accordance with the approved plans' condition, neighbouring amenity will be maintained (it is not considered necessary

to impose a specific condition in this regard on this occasion owing to the annotation on the plans).

- detract from the character of neighbouring properties through siting, excessive bulk, ill-matching materials or inconsistent design; NO - the proposal is modest in size and set off the boundary with the neighbouring property by 1m, which helps to mitigate any possible outlook or overbearing concerns. Whilst outlook from the ground floor side elevation kitchen window may reduce slightly, the extension is not considered to result in significant overbearing impacts, given the angle of orientation between this window and the proposed extension. The proposed materials will match the existing, as confirmed via condition.
- detract from the appearance of the street or area by using ill-matched materials, glazing and detailing; NO - as above.

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity 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.

To assess this, the following has been considered - would the proposal cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety.

A number of these matters have already been addressed in the H9 assessment above. In summary, the conversion of the garage to form a habitable room and the porch extension are considered relatively modest additions which would not result in any significant adverse impacts to any neighbouring occupiers.

In terms of current and future occupiers of the host building, the proposals will improve the quality of accommodation provided.

Other matters

Transport - as per the transport consultation response above at section 4, the loss of a garage is not considered harmful, as sufficient off-street parking would continue to be provided at the site, as secured via condition.

7. 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.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

1HA (TL1 / AP1 / M1) & DC1
IF1; IF3; IF5; IF6; IF7.