

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 210843/HOU

Address: 15 Birch Avenue, Reading

Proposal: Proposed single storey side extension and internal alterations.

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Target Date: 20/07/2021

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application property is a two storey detached dwelling located on the southern side of Birch Avenue, on the corner with Lawrence Road.

The topography of Birch Avenue rises steeply in a south-westerly direction such that the natural ground level rises towards the western side of the property. The surrounding area is predominantly residential.

The property is not a listed building, nor located within a conservation area.

Proposal:

This is an application for a single storey side extension following demolition of existing single storey side porch addition. The proposed materials would match those of the host dwelling.

Plans Considered:

Drawing No: Existing Drawings 21079 AD-00 Rev A

Received 25th May 2021

Drawing No: OS Map and Block Plan 21079 AD-OS Rev C

Drawing No: Proposed Drawings Option 1 21079 AD-O1 Rev E

Received 29th June 2021

Relevant Planning History:

None.

Consultation Responses:

None.

Neighbour letters were sent to adjoining properties at 11 Birch Avenue and 30 and 32 Lawrence Road. No neighbour letters of representation received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

The agent was advised that whilst there was no objection to a single storey side extension in principle, the extension as originally proposed was considered out of proportion with the host dwelling in terms of width and height of the proposed roof. Revised plans were received reducing the width and consequently lowering the roof, resulting in more subservient feature.

No formal pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission of this application.

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

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

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

Supplementary Planning Guidance

A Design Guide to House Extensions (2021)

Appraisal

The main issues are considered to be:

- Design, impact on the host dwelling, character of the area and street scene
- Impact on neighbouring amenity

Design, impact on the host dwelling, character of the area and street scene

Policy CC7 Seeks that all development is of high-quality design and maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area within which it is located. Policy H9 seeks that houses extensions should respect the character of the host dwelling, character and pattern of surrounding dwellings and the area in terms of scale, design and any important existing building line.

Concerns were originally raised that the proposed extension, due to its width and height of the proposed roof, did not satisfactorily integrate with the host property. Revised plans were received reducing the width and consequently lowering the roof, resulting in more subservient feature. Whilst the extension would not be set back from the main front elevation given its single storey nature and materials to match, which would assist in the extension assimilating successfully, it is considered that the proposed extension is sufficient in its design and proportion that it does not detract from the character of the host property such to warrant a refusal.

Further to the above, the proposals would utilise the footprint of the existing side porch addition to be demolished and given the distance to the side boundary and the garden space that would remain, it is considered that this specific plot could accommodate the extension without resulting in a cramped appearance or overdevelopment of the plot.

With the property being a corner plot, combined with the change in site levels, the extension would be visible in the street scene. Indeed, the extension would be forward of the Lawrence Road building line. However, as above, given its single storey nature, that the roof would be hipped away from the side boundary combined with the distance to the side boundary and significant distance to No.32 Lawrence Road to the south, it is not considered to result in any adverse impact on the visual amenities of the wider area. Furthermore, the extension would be relatively screened from Lawrence Road by the existing hedging along the boundary.

In addition to the above, Policy H9 notes that ancillary accommodation will be acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately. Noting the bedroom and en-suite bathroom proposed, the extension would be fully connected to the main property. In any case a condition is recommended to ensure that the accommodation remains ancillary.

In overall terms the proposals are considered to comply with the both Policies H9 and H10 and also the overriding design Policy CC7.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

Policy CC8 seeks that proposals should not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

Given the position and scale of the proposed extension, combined with the significant distance to neighbouring properties, it is not considered to result in any loss of amenity to any neighbouring property in terms of loss of light, privacy or overbearing effects.

Therefore, in overall terms it is considered that the proposals comply with Policy CC8.

Other matters

There is a street tree to the west of the application site. An informative is recommended to be attached to advise the applicant to avoid use of the grass verge for development related activity which could potentially harm this street tree.

Conclusion

Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh in favour of granting planning permission subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT subject to conditions and informatives