

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham

App Ref: 210206/FUL

Address: 34, 36, 36a Mill Road, Reading, RG4 8DP

Proposals: Single storey front and two storey side and rear extension at 34 Mill Road. First floor rear extension at 36 Mill Road. Single storey front and rear and two storey side extension at 36A Mill Road.

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mr E Jennings

Date received: 09/02/2021

Valid from: 22/02/2021

Target Decision date: 31/05/2021, extension of time on decision agreed from 19/04/2021

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is a two-storey three terraced row on Mill Road, Caversham. Mill Road is characterised as being largely residential with a mix of large two-storey semi-detached, semi-detached, and terraced rows. Two semi-detached pairs adjoin the proposal site, while a terraced adjoins the rear of the proposal site along Piggotts Road. The proposal site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks the following:

- 34 Mill Road: Single storey front and two storey side and rear extension.
- 36 Mill Road: First floor rear extension.
- 36A Mill Road: Single storey front and rear extensions, and two storey side extension.

Alterations are also proposed to the driveways of all three properties, with access alterations also proposed including extending the dropped kerb.

The development proposed under application 210206 is a modified proposal (scaled down development) from application 200582, which was refused on 20/07/2020, and application 201550, which was withdrawn on 19/01/2021 (see relevant history).

Plans considered:

- ~~Block and Location Plans - 39219-01 Rev B~~
- Existing Ground Floor Plan - 39219-03 Rev A
- Existing First Floor Plan - 39219-04 Rev A
- Existing Elevations - 39219-05 Rev A
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan - 39219-06 Rev B
- Proposed First Floor Plan - 39219-07 Rev B
- Proposed Elevations - 39219-09 Rev B
- Design and Access Statement
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats) at 34, 36 and 36A Mill Road Caversham - SPH/ET/PEA-20/19.08

Received on 09/02/2021

- Flood Risk Assessment - 34, 36 & 36a Mill Road, Caversham, RG4 8DP - March 2020 - 20-6793 Rev A

Received on 22/02/2021

- Planning Statement from Applicant
- Site Plan - 39219-02 Rev A
- Block and Location Plans - 39219-01 Rev C

Received on 30/04/2021

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

171453/FUL - 2-Storey rear and side extensions with loft conversions and flat roof dormers to create 5 additional flats. - Application Returned on 06/09/2017

200582/FUL - Two storey side and single storey front extensions at 34 and 36A Mill Road, two storey rear extensions at 34 and 36 Mill Road, single storey rear extension 34 Mill Road and loft conversions with flat roof dormers at 34, 36 and 36A Mill Road. To change the use from three houses to two houses, one ground floor apartment, one first floor apartment and two second floor studios. - Application Refused on 20/07/2020

Reasons for refusal:

1. The three properties that comprise the application site do not measure more than 120sqm gross each and are therefore, not considered of suitable size to be converted to self-contained flats contrary to Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
2. The proposed extensions (side, rear and dormers), by way of their scale, bulk and lack of subservience, are considered a detrimental addition to the street scene and are not considered to suitably integrate with the proportions of the original dwellings. As such, the proposal is considered contrary to Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'A Design Guide to House Extensions' (2003).
3. The development, by way of its proximity to adjacent dwellings, namely 2 Mill Green and 32 Mill Road, is considered to reduce outlook to the windows of these properties to a substantially harmful degree. As such, the proposal is not compliant with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
4. The proposed development (Apartments 2, 3, 4 and no. 36 Mill Road) would fail to meet the nationally described space standards for new dwellings as set out in Policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). In addition, by way of its layout (bedroom arrangement), the proposed development (Apartment 2, 36 and 36A) would also create a poor quality of living accommodation for future occupiers contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
5. The proposal fails to provide a policy compliant level of vehicle parking provision, cycle provision and Electric Vehicle charging points contrary to Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
6. In the absence of a completed preliminary roost assessment, the likely impact the proposal would have on bats cannot be determined (which are a protect species and a material consideration in the planning process). As such, the proposal is not compliant with Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System.
7. The proposal fails to provide appropriate areas of soft landscaping to the front of the site, and would therefore not contribute to the overall character and appearance and amenity of Mill Road, particularly around the site boundaries. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies CC3, CC7, EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
8. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to Policies CC9 and H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2013.

201550/FUL - Single storey front and two storey side and rear extension at 34 Mill Road, single storey rear extension at 36 Mill Road, single storey front and rear extension with two storey side extension at 36A Mill Road. - Application Withdrawn on 19/01/2021

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *The following addresses were consulted by letter.*

32 Mill Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DP - No response received.

2 Mill Green, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8EX - No response received.

4 Mill Green, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8EX - No response received.

6 Mill Green, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8EX - No response received.

8 Mill Green, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8EX - No response received.

11 Piggotts Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8EN - Response received on 29/03/2021

- We are concerned and worried about the proposal to both extend out and adjust the roof structure of this development because of the significant reduction of natural light that we will experience and suffer. The elevation proposals show a very large increase in coverage and mass which seem to us as overbearing, overwhelming and disproportionate. We value the time we spend in our garden with our children and this will have a negative effect on that. We already live within a dense urban area and this development will add to the density by blocking sunlight that we value for large parts of the afternoon and evening throughout the year. It will also affect many other surrounding gardens and will have a detrimental effect on the quality of life on our family and the families in the area.

13 Piggotts Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8EN - Response received on 22/03/2021

- The revised plans in the latest application do not appear to satisfy the many reasons for rejection of the first similar application (number 200582) - i.e. policies CC3, CC7, CC8, H9, EN14 (at least). The extensions at both ends of the property (including an unnecessary gable roof) will encroach unreasonably on the neighbouring properties, and is excessive given the available space. It would also be out of keeping with the rest of the street, and cause a significant loss of light for many surrounding properties on Piggotts Road, Mill Road and Queens Road.

15 Piggotts Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8EN - No response received.

17 Piggotts Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8EN - No response received.

19 Piggotts Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8EN - Response received on 22/03/2021

- The extensions will intrude on our light
- They will remove any privacy that we may have both in the garden and the house
- Tenants of these properties may in the future cause problems with noise, parking, security and many other issues
- The area is already full as far as parking is concerned and more vehicles will cause environmental problems at the time that Reading Borough Council is trying to cut it's pollution.

Reading Borough Council, Transport - Response received on 31/03/2021

- The proposed side extension for No 34 will result in the loss of the existing garage. Submitted block plan illustrates 8 proposed off road parking spaces along the frontage of all 3 of the properties, however existing parking layout has not been provided. Plans are required to demonstrate that there is clear access to the front of the buildings.
- The proposed 8 parking spaces is in excess of that required. The 3 existing properties are served by 2 existing dropped kerbs. The proposed block plan illustrates a new dropped kerb is proposed, the extent of the adjusted dropped kerb would need to be illustrated on revised plans. A license would be required from the Highways Department to undertake any works on the Public Highway. A lower car parking provision can be accepted and would still comply with the current standards. Plans illustrating the existing parking arrangements and illustration of dropped kerbs are required to fully determine this application.

Reading Borough Council, Transport - Further response received on 20/05/2021 upon review of amended plans and additional information submitted on 30/04/2021

- Council's policy is that the access should not be in excess of 10m therefore a revised car parking layout should be submitted.
- There are concerns that the reversing distance would not be 6m as a result of parked cars opposite. It is therefore suggested that an on-site turning area with cars parking at 90° to the house. The downside to this would be the increased space this would likely require and the loss of landscaping to the front but that would be for Natural Environment Officer to assess.
- Transport would be willing to allow for a reduction in proposed on site vehicle parking spaces given that the site currently has only legal access for 2 driveway spaces and a garage space.

Reading Borough Council, Ecology - Response received on 22/03/2021

- The proposals are very similar to application 201550. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Bat Assessment report (Ref: SPH/ET/PEA-20/19.08, Urban Tree Experts, August 2020) submitted with application 201550 has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the proposals are unlikely to affect protected species or priority habitats. Conditions at the site are unlikely to have changed since the survey was undertaken (in August 2020) and therefore, there are no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

Reading Borough Council, Trees - Response received on 16/03/2021

- The Natural Environment Team were consulted on this proposal on occasion of previous planning application 201550, withdrawn on 19th January 2021.
- I see no amendments to the application that would warrant updated comments from our part, except the use of 'grasscrete' for the paving of the (still) 8 frontage parking spaces - which is not significant. Please consider the comments provided on 2nd December still applicable, as quoted below:
- "The application at 34, 36&36A Mill Road proposes one and two storey extensions on 3 sides of the building. The new extensions would certainly provide improved quality of life for the house residents in terms of space, but the onsite amenity value or opportunities for said residents are lacking or questionable. While the building area proposals are considerable in size and share of the available space, there are no provisions for soft landscaping or planting accompanying them.
- Council policy EN14 TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLANDS requires a net positive gain in green spaces or number of shrubs and trees with any new development, be it either "within the application site, on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations". (...)
- As is, this submission does not satisfy the landscape principles we are seeking to secure with every development in order to reach our objectives (short, medium or long term), therefore I raise an objection on the grounds stated above."

Reading Borough Council, Trees - Further response received on 06/05/2021 upon review of amended plans and additional information submitted on 30/04/2021

- Previous natural environment comments raised an objection to this application on the grounds of (1) overdevelopment of a site with already no frontage landscaping and little rear gardens area and vegetation and (2) the lack of any new planting provisions in line with our EN14 Policy and Tree Strategy.
- The parking provision is reduced to 7 from 8 initial spaces and the resulting available space is used for 2 rows of hedge planting between the frontages of the 3 addresses. While this attempt to introduce at least some hedge vegetation is well received, in reality I don't think it is a suitable long term feature - both rows will probably be an obstacle for people getting in and out of their cars and will likely get trampled on.
- Therefore, the surface treatment, proposed as 4 alternatives, remains the only viable 'frontage greening'. I consider the 'grasscrete' (as a principle) as the most suitable for the situation, but I would like the provision to improve further with a 'grassguard' solution. Grasscrete is quite bare, showing a lot of concrete for the grass area provided, while grassguard has a higher net grass area.
- These provisions are not ideal in terms of vegetation gain following development, but we acknowledge the need for and benefits of off-site parking and will, on balance, consider acceptable the layout if grassguard will be provisioned.

- In conclusion, we will reluctantly lift our objection and support this application if the grassguard provision is included in the amended plans (with the hedging omitted), therefore one more submission is necessary.

Reading Borough Council, Environmental Protection - No response received.

A site notice was displayed from Sunday 7th March 2021, expiring on Sunday 28th March 2021. One additional response was received as detailed below.

145 Queens Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DN - Response received on 08/03/2021

- The installation of a gable-ended roof, coupled with the extra length of the proposed structure compared to the original, would block out light to the properties located in front and behind it, as well as resulting in excessive and oppressive massing. The present structure has a hipped roof which allows substantial penetration of sunlight along the East-West axis.
- The proposed gable ends would in addition be out of keeping with the property next door at 30-32 Mill Road which is of exactly the same design as the present structure and has a hipped roof.
- The creation of a row of parking spaces at the front of the proposed structure would mar the appearance of the street scene.

The concerns and objections raised above will be addressed in section 7 (Appraisal) of this report.

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)

CC3 Adaption to Climate Change

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

EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodland

EN18 Flooding and Drainage

TR3 Access, Traffic and Highways-Related matters

TR5 Car and cycle parking and Electric Vehicle Parking

SPG/SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (Adopted March 2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 Design and the Public Realm

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

The proposed development is considered an overdevelopment of the proposal site due to the cumulative impact of the proposed extensions across the site as a whole. The proposed two storey side extensions are considered to harm the character and appearance of the existing dwellings and surrounding area. When considered in combination with the front and rear extensions proposed; in cumulative terms the additions as a whole are considered to overwhelm the character and appearance of the existing properties. Paragraph 6.1.1 of the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (Adopted March 2021) states that a successful application will demonstrate that the proposals are subservient to the existing dwelling and respect the original design and style. The proposed extensions are not considered to respect the original design and style of the terraced row.

While the side extensions have been set back and down from the existing ridge, it is considered that this only accentuates the appearance of the extensions being an overdevelopment and not subservient. The roof formation of the proposed two storey side extension at number 36a is also considered contrived and not to respect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling due to the angle of the extensions to the side boundary.

The Design Guide to House Extensions SPD states that side extensions should be designed to be in proportion with the original house, in this case the terraced row. The proposed development has utilised techniques in order to make the proposed extensions appear more subservient than previous applications by setting the height of the ridge lower than the existing ridge and setting the front elevation back from the existing front elevation. It is considered however, the proposed development includes an unacceptable roof treatment with regards to the proposed two storey side extensions. As stated in the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD; insensitively designed extensions can have a detrimental impact on the street scene. The gable roof formation proposed is considered jarring, contrived and not to respect the character and appearance of the street scene.

Paragraph 7.2.4 of the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD states that roof design should complement the roof of the original house in terms of design and angle of pitch. In this instance, the proposed two storey side extensions do not consist of roof designs that complement the original terraced row. The gable end roof formation proposed to the two storey side extensions is considered at odds with the hipped roof formation to the existing terraced row.

It is noted that the materials used in the construction of the proposed extensions have been specified to match the existing dwellings on the application form, however, the size and scale of the extensions proposed in relation to the existing terraced row is considered the prevailing issue.

The proposed extensions are not considered subservient to the terraced row, and are at odds with the prevailing character and appearance of the street scene of Mill Road and Queens Road. The proposed extensions are considered an overdevelopment of the site. Therefore, the proposed development is not considered in accordance with policy H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and guidance within the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (Adopted March 2021).

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, development will be assessed to ensure that it:

- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*
- *Address the needs of all in society and are accessible, usable and easy to understand by them, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping*

Proposed developments of the size and scale are not considered characteristic of the surrounding area. The properties surrounding the proposal site consist of two storey semi-detached dwellings and terraced rows along Mill Road, Mill Green and Piggotts Road, all of which feature pitched roof formations. The only outlier being 4 Mill Green, which has a gable end roof to facilitate a rear dormer sought under permitted development (approved under application 172171).

It should be noted that a loft conversion with rear dormer and hipped to gable roof application was refused at 13 Piggotts Road under application 131352. The reason for refusal being that the proposed roof from hip to gable by reason of its relationship with the existing house, would result in an overly dominant and a visually jarring feature that fails to respect the character and appearance of the existing house, and fails to respect the character and pattern of neighbouring properties in terms of roof design, and therefore results in harm to the street scene.

The reason for refusal for application 131352 is considered applicable to the side extensions proposed under application 210206 too. While it is acknowledged that the side extensions have been set down from the existing ridge and set back from the existing front elevations, the proposed gable end roof formations are considered dominant and a visually jarring feature in relation to the existing hipped roof terraced row. Therefore, the proposed two storey side extensions are considered to harm the street scene and does not reinforce local character. The proposed extensions are not considered visually attractive and not complicit with policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Despite the reduced scale of the proposed development submitted within this application, the proposed development is not considered to have gone far enough to overcome previous concerns within this application.

The proposal is not considered appropriate in its scale, massing and design in relation to both the existing dwelling and the surrounding area. This leads to the view that a proposed development of this size and scale is not characteristic of the surrounding area and does not respond positively to its local context or reinforce local character. Therefore, the proposed development is not considered in accordance with policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

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 factors including:

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

It is also relevant that Policy H9 also guards against extensions which present an overbearing impact on neighbours.

32 Mill Road and the semi-detached pair of 2-4 Mill Green have windows looking directly towards the application site. The existing side elevation of 34 Mill Road is 7.5-8m away from the neighbouring property 32 Mill Road. The existing side elevation of 36a Mill Road is 20m away from the rear of neighbouring properties 2-4 Mill Green. The proposed extensions proposed would reduce these gaps to 4.5m between 32 and 34 Mill Road, and 15m between the side of 36a Mill Road and the rear of 2-4 Mill Green.

With the gaps closing a considerable distance, combined with gable end roof formations utilised within the proposed two storey side extensions, it is considered that the proposed development would harm the outlook of 32 Mill Road and 2-4 Mill Green, with the development appearing overbearing.

Policy CC8 states:

- *A back-to-back distance of 20 metres between dwellings is usually appropriate, although the circumstances on individual sites may enable dwellings to be closer without a detrimental effect on privacy.*

The Design Guide to House Extensions SPD supports this aspect of policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan by stating that the extensions would likely not be supported if the resulting extension would reduce the back to back distance between dwellings to under 20m for two storey developments. While this development in particular concerns a side extension rather than a rear extension which the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD specifies, the proposed side extension would close the gap to the rear of 2-4 Mill Green. In this instance, this specific guidance on rear extensions is considered applicable to this application given the relationship between the proposed side extension and the rear of 2-4 Mill Green.

While the extensions are to the side of 36a Mill Road, the proposed two storey side extensions by virtue of their size, scale and gable end roof formation are considered imposing and to harm the back of 2-4 Mill Green in terms of harm to outlook with a visually dominating development. No windows or openings are proposed to the side elevation at 36a Mill Road so it is not considered that the privacy of 2-4 Mill Green would be harmed, but the outlook from these properties would be harmed.

The issue regarding the impact of the development on 32 Mill Road and 2 Mill Green was raised within application 200582, and was one of the reasons for refusal for that application. The reason for refusal being:

- *The development, by way of its proximity to adjacent dwellings, namely 2 Mill Green and 32 Mill Road, is considered to reduce outlook to the windows of these properties to a substantially harmful degree. As such, the proposal is not compliant with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).*

Despite the slight reduction in scale of the proposed development submitted under this application, the proposed development is not considered to have gone far enough to overcome this reason for refusal within this application.

Objections have been raised from residents along Piggotts Road regarding light, overlooking and safety, a back-to-back distance of 20m is maintained with these dwellings. Whilst these properties would notice the increase in bulk of development, it is considered that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of 11 to 19 Piggotts Road in terms of loss of light or privacy to the extent to warrant refusal of the application on this specific basis.

The objection from 145 Queens Road details concerns regarding the impact of the proposed development of the street scene (discussed in section 7.1 of this report), and the proposed on site vehicle parking (discussed in section 7.3 of this report). A concern was raised within the objection regarding a loss of sunlight to neighbouring properties. It is not considered that the proposed development would result in a harmful loss of light to neighbouring properties to such an extent to warrant the refusal of the application on this basis.

It is recognised that the proposed works would improve the quality of accommodation for current and future occupiers. In the planning balance however, the harmful design and amenity impacts identified above are considered to outweigh any planning benefits of the scheme.

Overall, the proposed development is considered unneighbourly, overbearing and would result in harm to the outlook to neighbouring properties in particular 32 Mill Road and 2-4 Mill Green. As a result, the proposed development is not considered favourably against Reading Borough Local Plan policies CC8 or H9. Furthermore, the proposed development is considered out of character with the character and appearance of the surrounding area due to the size, scale and bulk of the proposed works.

7.3 Transport

As out set out by Reading Borough Council Transport, there are highway safety concerns that have not been addressed within this planning application.

- Access should not be in excess of 10m therefore a revised car parking layout should be submitted.
- There are concerns that the reversing distance would not be 6m as a result of parked cars opposite. It is therefore suggested that an on-site turning area with cars parking at 90° to the house.

The provision of seven on site parking spaces is above the level of parking required. To accommodate the considered excessive levels of on site vehicle parking, it is proposed that the kerb fronting the proposal site be dropped in its entirety. This would result in a dropped kerb that would extend more than 20m. Concerns have also been raised regarding the adequate reversing distance as a result of vehicles parking on the opposite side of the road.

Due to the concerns raised regarding access proposed and the lack of an on-site vehicle turning area, the proposed development is not considered to contribute positively to highway safety for pedestrians and other vehicles, and congestion within the surrounding area and is not in accordance with policy TR3 or TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.4 Trees

Upon review of 'Site Plan - 39219-02 Rev A' received on 30/04/2021, it was pointed out by the Natural Environment Officer that the proposed hedge vegetation, while well received, would likely not be suitable long term or provide ease of access to and from vehicles on site given the level of parking.

Grasscrete was considered by the Natural Environment Officer to be suitable given the situation proposed, however, it was recommended that the provision be protected by a 'Grassguard' solution. It was also acknowledged that the benefits of on-site vehicle parking and considered the provision of Grasscrete acceptable in this instance, notwithstanding the highway safety issues raised by the Transport Officer as details in section 7.3 of this report.

The Natural Environment Officer concluded that they would reluctantly lift their objection and support the application if a revised plan is provided which demonstrates that 'Grassguard' will be utilised. A revised plan has not been provided. Had approval been recommended for this application, the 'Grassguard' solution would have been secured via planning condition to overcome the concerns raised by the Natural Environment Officer in accordance with policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. Given this matter can be resolved by condition had the scheme been supported, it therefore does not form a reason for refusal of the application.

7.5 Ecology & Flooding

A bat survey was submitted due to the works proposed to the roof space of the terraced row. The assessment declared that there was no visible evidence on the exterior of the building in which bats could roost or access the buildings to roost. It was concluded that there is negligible potential for roosting bats within the building and that no further survey efforts are required. This view was

supported by Reading Borough Council's Ecology consultant in accordance with policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

The proposal site is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. As a result, a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted to support the application. It concludes that to increase sustainability and reduce excavations, existing drainage should be utilised where possible within the new development. Prior to development, these drainage components should be checked for line, blockages and collapse; any defects should be corrected accordingly. The proposed development will see no increase in the impermeable area of the site and as such discharge rates and the volume of discharge will remain/and or be reduced. The risk of surface water flooding is considered to be low based upon the existing site topography and local drainage conditions.

It is noted that the assessment was performed based on the plans proposed within the previously refused application at the site - application 200582. The conclusions drawn and recommendations made from the Flood Risk Assessment are, however, considered applicable in this instance to the slightly reduced scheme under application 210206. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

8. CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed development is not considered subservient to the existing dwelling, or contribute positively to the character and appearance of the existing terraced row. This is due to the size, scale and location of the proposed works. The cumulative impact of each element of the proposed works leads to the view that the proposals represent an overdevelopment of the existing terraced row. If a revised project is put forward for the site, it would be expected for all elements of the proposed works to be scaled back to address concerns raised for this application, concerning the lack of subservience in its design, overbearing impact to neighbouring residents, and highway safety concerns due to the level on site vehicle parking proposed and parking layout.

Officers did advise the agent of these shortcomings and this conclusion. The agent was provided with an opportunity to withdraw the application prior to a decision being made, but this was not forthcoming (also acknowledging the right to appeal). Hence the above conclusion reached on the application, on the basis of the information submitted and consideration of all material matters.

Permission refused due to the following reasons:

1. The proposed extensions, by way of their scale, bulk and lack of subservience, are considered a detrimental addition to the street scene and are not considered to suitably integrate with the proportions of the original dwellings. As such, the proposal is considered contrary to Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Design Guide to House Extensions SPD' (Adopted March 2021)
2. The development, by way of its proximity to adjacent dwellings, namely 2 Mill Green and 32 Mill Road, is considered to reduce outlook to the windows of these properties to a substantially harmful degree. As such, the proposal is not compliant with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019).
3. The proposed vehicular access and parking layout has failed to demonstrate that it would not have a material impact on the functioning of the transport network, would not be detrimental to the safety of users and would comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority, contrary to Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD' (Adopted October 2011).

9. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

10. INFORMATIVES

IF0: Positive and Proactive Working - refusal

The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to see if relevant concerns could be resolved to allow permission to be granted. However, that has not been possible within the agreed extended timescale and therefore the decision to refuse planning permission has been taken.

C00: Plans Considered

The refusal relates only to the following plans and information as received by the local planning authority:

Plans considered:

- Block and Location Plans - 39219-01 Rev B
- Existing Ground Floor Plan - 39219-03 Rev A
- Existing First Floor Plan - 39219-04 Rev A
- Existing Elevations - 39219-05 Rev A
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Received on 30/04/2021

Landscaping Informative

Concerns were raised regarding the proposed soft landscaping to the driveway. A future application could potentially overcome these concerns by demonstrating on the plans that the proposed a 'Grassguard' solution would accompany the proposed grasscrete. As this matter could ultimately be resolved through a planning condition, it did not form a reason for refusal of the application, but should be considered in the event of any future application at the site.

I14: Pre-app Advice

This planning application was submitted without the benefit of first seeking pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority, which can often result in the avoidance of refusal of planning permission. Please see the following link to the Council's pre-application service here:

http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1190/Pre-Application-Enquiry-Form/pdf/Pre-app_Nov_2016.pdf