

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove

App Ref: 201084/HOU

Address: 26 Francis Street, Reading, RG1 2QB

Proposals: Single storey rear extension.

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mr P Maydeo

Date received (valid from): 29/07/2020

Target Decision date: 23/09/2020.

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is terraced dwelling along Francis Street, Katesgrove. The surrounding area is considered largely residential with similarly designed Victorian terraced rows.

A site visit for this application was not possible due to the Coronavirus lockdown. The applicant supplied site photos on 05/08/2020. These photos were used for the purpose of determining this application.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for a single storey rear extension. This would effectively repurpose the existing rear return at ground floor level, infilling the existing gap up to the side boundary in the process.

Plans considered:

- Location & Block Plan - FSER/01
- Existing Plans & Elevations - FSER/02
- Proposed Plans & Elevations - FSER/03

Received on 29/07/2020

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *The following addresses were consulted by letter.*

24 Francis Street, Reading, RG1 2QB - Response received on 25/08/2020.

- Due to its excessive depth the proposed extension will impact negatively upon our only living room window, which is our primary living space.
- Due to the height of the proposed extension and proximity to the boundary on the east side, there will be a significant loss of direct sunlight and consequent overshadowing and shading to our living room, kitchen and garden areas throughout a considerable part of the day.
- Due to its unreasonable scale and massing, coupled with its proximity to the boundary, the proposed extension would give rise to an overwhelming and dominating effect when viewed from within our house and garden.
- Our solicitor has informed us that a public sewer runs very close to the boundary of the property. The presence of that sewer is very likely to restrict further development (further building or extension) due to the restrictions imposed by the water company regarding building over or within proximity of such pipes and the requirements under the Building Regulations, which I appreciate is a separate matter, but one that could well give rise to later difficulties.

- Whilst a civil matter, it should be noted that it would be virtually impossible to build any wall on the boundary of any property without its footing, if of a conventional trench type, encroaching on neighbouring ground.
- Consider applying a 45-degree angle assessment from windows serving habitable rooms to determine the likely effect upon questions of light, outlook and residential amenity. In this case, the proposed addition, due to its height and proximity to the boundary fails to observe those general standards and consequently, should not be permitted.
- It is our further understanding that the general regulations are intended to control the height and depth of such additions when planned so close to boundaries, presumably to minimise the enclosing or 'tunnelling' effect upon neighbours that this scheme is expected to cause.
- The proposed addition, if permitted, would have a harmful effect upon the general standard of amenity that we currently receive and can reasonably expect to retain.

28 Francis Street, Reading, RG1 2QB - No response received.

23 Alpine Street, Reading, RG1 2PY - No response received.

25 Alpine Street, Reading, RG1 2PY - No response received.

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)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

EN15 Air Quality

SPG/SPD

Reading Borough Design Guide to House Extensions

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 Design

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 single storey rear extension has a depth of 5.56m and does not extend beyond the rear elevation of the existing outrigger. Both sides of the single storey rear extension are at the side boundaries to 24 and 28 Francis Street, with the maximum height of the proposed flat roof rear extension being 2.8m.

The materials selected in the design of the proposed single storey rear extension have been chosen to match the overall visual appearance of the 26 Francis Street. The proposed single storey rear extension features a flat roof with two rooflights serving the proposed kitchen. The rear elevation of the proposed single storey rear extension consists of a panel patio doors, which provides access to the garden. The arrangement of windows and doors to the single storey rear extension is considered acceptable. In itself the design would add a contemporary addition to the rear of the property and is not objectionable in itself in design terms.

7.2 Safeguarding Amenity

As well as the factors mentioned above in the design section, Policy H9 also details that extensions will be acceptable where they do not present an overbearing impact on neighbours or a large blank façade to public areas. Furthermore, the 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 considered that the proposed single storey rear extension would result in a tunnelling effect to 24 Francis Street. This is due to the height and depth of the proposed single storey extension in relation to the side boundary at 24 Francis Street. The eaves height of the proposed extension is 2.8m throughout its depth, meaning that the tunnelling effect would extend 5.56m along the boundary line. The proposed extension has not been set off the boundary, further contributing to the tunnelling effect.

The tunnelling effect is considered to detrimentally impact the living conditions at 24 Francis Street. As pointed out by the resident of 24 Francis Street in the consultation response to this application, the proposal is considered to harm the outlook from habitable rooms at 24 Francis Street, such as the kitchen and living room. This is demonstrated in the site photo and aerial photo below in figures 1 and 2, with the red circle highlighting the area that would be impacted by the tunnelling effect. It has also not been demonstrated within the application submission that the proposed development would not detrimentally impact the natural light levels to habitable rooms at 24 Francis Street (mindful of the guidance within the House Extensions SPD).



Fig 1. Existing rear elevation at 26 Francis Street (photograph provided by agent).



Fig 2. Existing rear elevation at 26 Francis Street (photograph provided by agent).

The proposed single storey rear extension is considered visually dominant to 24 Francis Street due to the height and depth of the rear extension in relation to the side boundary, contributing to a tunnelling effect that detrimentally impacts the living conditions at number 24. 24 Francis Street is considered to suffer the most from this proposal as it would harm the outlook from habitable rooms along the corridor at the boundary between 24 and 26 Francis Street and on the rear elevation of the main part of the house.

The proposed rear extension also fails to comply with guidance within A Design Guide to House Extensions SPD. A tunnelling effect (or referred to as a “shadowed alley”) would be created by the proposal due to the height and length of the proposed rear extension, combined with the proposal being set on the boundary to 24 Francis Street. With regard to the impact of the proposal at 28 Francis Street, it is considered that the proposal would not significantly harm the living conditions to this property due to the pre-existence of the outrigger at 26 Francis Street. The proposal would increase the height of the part of the outrigger at 26 Francis Street that extends beyond the rear elevation of existing outrigger at 28 Francis Street by 0.67m, however, this increase in height is not considered to have any meaningful negative impact to the living conditions at 28 Francis Street.

In terms of amenity for future occupiers (again considered within the context of Policy CC8), it is acknowledged that the proposal would increase the quality of accommodation for current and future occupiers of the host property, by increasing the size of the rear kitchen.

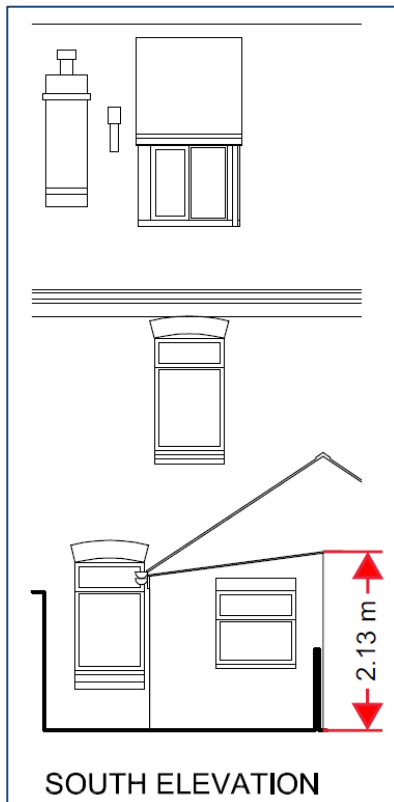


Fig 3. Existing rear elevation at 26 Francis Street (drawing FSER/02)

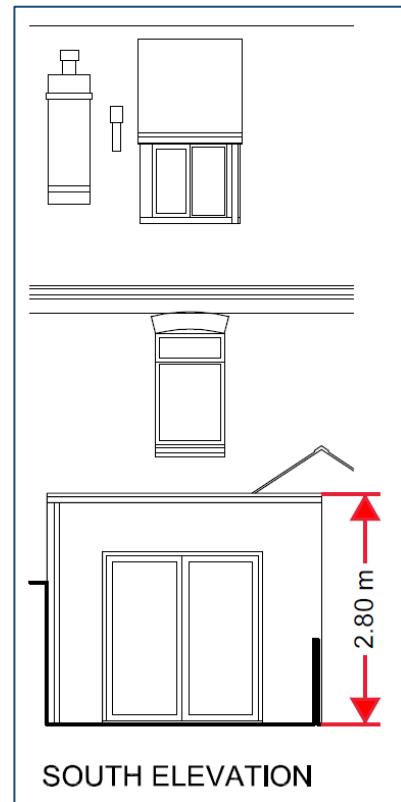


Fig 4. Proposed rear elevation at 26 Francis Street (drawing FSER/03)

7.3 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation, house extension proposals are acceptable where it *'Does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens'*.

The proposed development is to take place on an already developed part of the site. The side extension is within the curtilage of the existing garage (to be converted), the rear extension is to be constructed on the existing rear patio. As such, the proposed development is considered not to represent a loss of biodiversity within the garden to the point of refusal for this application.

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space, which states that: *Usable outdoor space for houses should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling. To which it relates.*

It is considered that this proposal will not represent an unacceptable loss in private outdoor space. As the size of the private outdoor space will still be larger than the usable floor space of the dwelling on the ground floor.

7.4 Air Quality

This proposal has been considered against Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN15, as the proposal site is within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). As demonstrated in the policy, this proposal does not meet the requirements for an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) and is considered not enough of a detrimental impact air quality to warrant such an assessment due to the size and scale of the proposal.

8. CONCLUSION

Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore does not weigh in favour of granting

planning permission. More specifically, whilst the benefits of improving the quality of accommodation for current and future occupiers of the unit and there are no in-principle design concerns in itself, the harmful amenity impacts on the neighbouring property are considered to outweigh the benefits of the proposals when applying a critical overall planning balance of all material considerations

Permission is therefore refused due to the following reasons:

1. The proposed single storey rear extension, owing to the height and depth adjoining the shared boundary with 24 Francis Street, is considered to create a tunnelling effect that would result in detrimental harm in terms of visual dominance and an overbearing effect, and harm to the outlook of habitable rooms to the rear of 24 Francis Street. The proposal has also failed to demonstrate that the proposal would not detrimentally impact the natural light levels to habitable rooms at 24 Francis Street. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policies H9 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019), and guidance on rear extensions within the A Design Guide to House Extensions SPD.

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 prescribed target or 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 drawings as received by the local planning authority:

Plans considered:

- Location & Block Plan - FSER/01
- Existing Plans & Elevations - FSER/02
- Proposed Plans & Elevations - FSER/03

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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