

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Peppard

App Ref: 211189/HOU

Address: 126 Surley Row, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8QD

Proposals: Additional storey plus proposed rear and side two storey extensions

Case Officer: James Schofield

Date received (valid from): 20 July 2021 Target Decision date: 6 October 2021

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

126 Surley Row is a detached single-storey dwelling located on a pie shaped site at the intersection of St Barnabas Road and Surley Row. The area is characterised by relatively generous plots, set back from the road. As such there is a minimum of 20 meters between any given elevation of 126 Surley Row and a neighbouring elevation. Both Surley Row and St Barnabas Road in this area are lined with hedgerows. The site falls within a habitat suitable for use by protected species of bats.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is for the addition of a first-floor to the existing bungalow and two-storey side extensions to the south, north, and east elevations at a depth of 1.4 meters, 2.5 meters, and 2.3 meters respectively. The scheme would re-orient the access from Surley Row to St Barnabas Road including a garage, paved area and re-positioning of bins. The original proposal did not specify the type of paving to be used or the planting scheme, and the east elevation of the garage/ensuite bathroom presented a blank wall to St Barnabas Road. Further to talks with the planning officer the agent submitted amended plans which indicated permeable paving would be used in the parking area, new hedges would be planted along Surley Row and a new tree would be planted in the corner of the parking area along St Barnabas Road. Plans considered:

Drawing No. DRG.01 Location Plan

~~Drawing No. DRG.02 Proposed Ground Floor Plan (*Superseded*)~~

~~Drawing No. DRG.03 Proposed First Floor Plan (*Superseded*)~~

~~Drawing No. DRG.04 Proposed Roof Plan (*Superseded*)~~

~~Drawing No. DRG.05 Proposed Elevations (*Superseded*)~~

Drawing No. DRG.07 Indicative 3D Visuals

Drawing No. GSL21109-300 Existing Elevations & Sections

Bat Survey

Planning Design & Access Statement

As received 20th of July 2021

Drawing No. DRG.02A Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No. DRG.03A Proposed First Floor Plan

Drawing No. DRG.04A Proposed Roof Plan

Drawing No. DRG.05A Proposed Elevations

As received 1st of October 2021

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Neighbours

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

203 Surley Row, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8QD
19 St Barnabas Road, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8RA
203 Surley Row, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8QD

Two objections were received from residents of 203 Surley Row. 203 Surley Row is opposite the proposed development site directly to its west. The concerns expressed related to a concern that the distance between the properties would be insufficient and that the scheme would result in a loss of light, be visually unappealing, and damage the verdant country road character of the area. Further concerns related to inter-neighbour relations and a sense that posting a site notice was not sufficient consultation.

Planning Officer note: If the scheme were to be built the minimum distance between the west, north, and east elevations and the nearest neighbours would be approximately 22 metres. The council aims to maintain a minimum rear elevation to rear elevation distance of 20 metres - but does not offer suggestions for front elevations at 'Y' shaped intersections. It is noted that the majority of dwellings in this area are two-storey dwellings and that the distance between the proposed development and neighbours means the impact on light for front gardens would be minimal. It is also noted that generally front gardens are considered to be less sensitive than rear gardens as they are less private and infrequently used extensively for socialising and relaxation when compared to rear gardens. The distance between the south elevation and the nearest neighbour is reduced slightly, however, the side elevation to side elevation distance between 126 Surley Row and 19 St Barnabas is still larger than the typical distance in the area and quite large at over 12 metres. Concerns regarding loss of hedges and trees is addressed to some degree by amended plans proposing hedges along Surley Row and the new tree on St Barnabas Road. See sections 7.2 and 7.3 for further discussion of the impact of the proposal on the area and neighbours.

The council's documents, including neighbour comments, indicate that a Site Notice was displayed by the applicant.

Ecology

No objections as the bat survey is sufficient to suggest that the proposal would not result in harm to protected species.

Transport

No objections; parking within suggested parameters.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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.

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 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted 2019)

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021)

Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System

6. APPRAISAL

6.1 Principle of development

The application seeks permission for intensive alterations including the addition of a first-floor and various two-storey side extensions to an existing residential bungalow. Such domestic works are supported in principle by Policy H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Local Plan (2019) subject to a number of criteria ensuring the effects of such extensions and alterations respect its context and are not harmful. These considerations will be examined in more detail in the following sections.

6.2 Character and scale

Local Policy CC7 states that, development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area in Reading in which it is located. Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it: respects the character of the house, respects the pattern of neighbouring properties, and does not present a large blank façade to public areas. The SPD 'Design Guide to House Extensions' provides guidance on design considerations for extensions, which outlines that the design should not detract from the existing dwelling, not encroach on a line taken 45 degrees from the mid-point of the nearest neighbouring habitable room, and should not harm common building lines or positive repeating design features.

The proposed alterations are at such an intensive scale that the nature of the development is closer to a total demolition and replacement of the original dwelling than extending it. However, if the scheme were to be assessed as a new replacement dwelling rather than extending the existing one, the scheme would be acceptable in terms of both the proposed character and scale. This is because the scheme re-orientates the dwelling toward St Barnabas Road where houses are frequently relatively large, share a relatively loose building line, and are a mix of early 20th century and modern architectural features. The distances between the proposed dwelling and neighbours ensures the impact is not unacceptable.

Guidance and Policy H9 requires schemes do not present large blank walls to public views. Initially the east elevation included a blank façade. Further to talks between the Officer and the Agent amendments were submitted which included a small window in the ensuite bathroom breaking up the blank façade to an acceptable degree. The replacement of hedges and trees ensures that, at least within the scope of this application, the tree and hedgerow lined character of Surley Row and St Barnabas Road is maintained.

For the reasons discussed above, the development is not considered to cause any harm to the character or appearance of the dwelling, the wider area and existing building lines. The design approach is considered appropriate to the specifics of the site and its context, and as such, the proposed development accords with the aims of Policy CC7 and the design considerations of H9.

6.3 Amenity

Policy CC8 requires development to refrain from causing a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or resulting in unacceptable living conditions for residents of the dwelling. Policy H9 complements these aims by indicating that acceptable development will not present an overbearing impact on neighbours or public areas.

As demonstrated on plans, the proposed first-floor extension would not result in an unacceptable loss of light or an overbearing impact on neighbours or public areas due to both the scale and design of the proposed development and site-specific details of the application site.

Over half of the garden would be maintained.

The site benefits from the relative distance between it and neighbouring sites. As such, the alterations are deemed to avoid any concerns about detrimental impact on neighbour's privacy, sunlight or overbearingness. No 45-degree line of views would be obstructed for 19 St Barnabas Road. The site does not fall within any protected views as per EN5.

The proposed development is deemed to accord with the concerns of policies CC8 and H9 regarding residential amenity. It is considered that construction works can frequently result in a temporary detrimental impact on residential amenity. A condition limiting the timing of construction works is considered to aid in ameliorating some of the worst effects of construction works on neighbouring sites.

6.4 Biodiversity and sustainability

Part 'b' of Policy EN12 indicates that all development sites should not result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. These aims are supported by Policy H9 which states that an extension will only be acceptable where it does not result in the loss of biodiversity within gardens. *Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System* requires the establishment of the presence or otherwise of protected species prior to the granting of planning permission.

The site does include any protected trees or identified Green Links. Neighbour objections indicate that trees have been removed prior to the application being made. Unfortunately, these cannot be addressed within the scope of this application as there is no legal basis to do so. Further to the amendments which include replacement hedges and a new tree, the proposal ensure that relative

to the current state of the site, the proposal would not result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. As such the proposal is considered to accord with the biodiversity and sustainability considerations of Policies H9 and EN12 of the local plan and to accord with the requirements of Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05.

7. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The development would involve the creation of additional C3 residential floorspace and as the extended residential floorspace would be over 100sqm gross internal floor area it would trigger the liability for CIL. This would be at the rate £156.71 per sqm (2021 rate). CIL does not form part of the determination, but an informative is included regarding the CIL process following determination.

8. CONCLUSION

In light of the above assessment the proposal is considered, on balance, to accord with the requirements of the development plan. As such, the proposed development is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

10. CONDITIONS

1. Standard time-limit (TL1)
2. Standard approved plans (AP1)
3. Materials as specified (M3)
4. Hours of Construction/Demolition (C1)
5. Bats & works to roofs (I12)