

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames
App Ref: 191986
Address: 26 Highdown Avenue, Emmer Green, Reading RG4 8QS
Proposal: Proposed two storey rear extension and single storey side extension.
Case Officer: James Schofield
Applicant: Sarah Hall
Date received (valid from): 16 December 2019
Target Decision date: 31 July 2020

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Highdown Avenue is a suburban street characterised by detached dwellings in a mixture of architectural styles and materials including 2-storey houses and chalet style bungalows with a mixture of gable and hipped roofs, and wall treatments in brick and/or render. These dwellings typically enjoy generous gardens. The application site is a two-storey dwelling, with a gable ended roof and attached garage with a flat roof.

The site does not include any protected trees, and the site is not within a conservation area. The site is within an area deemed to be suitable for bats.

2. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks permission for single-storey side extension and two-storey rear extension. This would provide increased accommodation at the first and second floor. Plans considered:

Drawing No. HALL-1119-01 Ground Floor Plan
Drawing No. HALL-1119-02 First Floor Plan
Drawing No. HALL-1119-03 Proposed Elevations
Drawing No. HALL-1119-04 Existing Floor Plans
Drawing No. HALL-1119-05 Existing Elevations
Drawing No. HALL-1119-06 Section AA
Drawing No. HALL-1119-07 Section BB
Drawing No. HALL-1119-08 Section CC
Drawing No. HALL-1119-09 Block & Location Plan
As received 18 December 2019

Drawing No. HALL-1119-01 Ground Floor Plan
Drawing No. HALL-1119-02 First Floor Plan Rev A
Drawing No. HALL-1119-03 Proposed Elevations Rev A
Drawing No. HALL-1119-04 Existing Floor Plans
Drawing No. HALL-1119-05 Existing Elevations
Drawing No. HALL-1119-06 Section AA Rev A
Drawing No. HALL-1119-07 Section BB Rev A
Drawing No. HALL-1119-08 Section CC Rev A
Drawing No. HALL-1119-09 Block & Location Plan Rev A
As received 13 March 2020

Bat Emergence Survey
As received 26 June 2020

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Neighbours

A site notice was displayed and all adjoining neighbours were consulted by letter. Five property owners responded with 3 writing in support of the application and 2 objecting. The grounds for objection were concerns about loss of light, privacy and appearance of the originally proposed development. Subsequent discussions carried out by the Planning Officer with the applicant resulted in revisions to the proposal. A further objection was made culminating in the final revision received 14 July. The following assessment is based on the most recently submitted plans.

Natural Environment

Officers indicated there were no objections regarding tree concerns.

Ecology

Officers indicated the site is within an area deemed to be suitable for bats and a bat survey would need to be sought. One was subsequently sought and the Ecology Officer has provided the following comments in response:

Although the bat survey was not undertaken in strict accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Survey Guidelines (which state that to determine the presence or absence of roosting bats in a building with high bat roost potential two dusk and one dawn survey need to be carried out - whereas three dusk surveys were undertaken), the findings are likely to be accurate and it is considered unlikely that the proposals will affect roosting bats as long as the recommendations given in the report are adhered to. As such, subject to the condition below, there are no objections to this application on ecology grounds:

Condition: The development is to be carried out in accordance with the details given in section 5.3 of the bat survey report (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy - dated 24/06/2020 - Ref: R2540/a) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that bats, a group of protected species, are not adversely affected by the proposals.

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 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

H14: Suburban Renewal and Regeneration

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-related Matters

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 Principle of development

Residential extensions and alterations are supported in principle by Policy H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) and Policy H14 (Suburban Renewal and Regeneration) 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.

7.2 Character and scale

Policy CC7 of the Local Plan states that, development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it: respects the character of the house, the pattern of neighbouring properties and building lines.

The proposed side and first floor extensions would significantly enlarge the scale of the dwelling, but it is not considered that this would be to a detrimental degree. The *Design Guide to House Extensions SPD* indicates that extensions should typically be subservient in nature to the original dwelling; this proposal does this. The proposed extensions maintain subservience to the main dwelling. And the proposal makes use of design components including the layout, design detail, materials and architectural language (as discussed in CC7) which respond positively to that of the site and the wider area. The overall result is a proposal which respects the character of the dwelling and the wider area while improving the local built environment and modernising the residential amenity of the dwelling itself. The wider area is characterised by a range of dwelling types including a mix of houses and chalet bungalows, and plots where

properties have been enlarged significantly. An enlarged property to create a two-storey dwelling is not considered to be incongruent within this context, subject to it meeting amenity considerations.

It is therefore considered acceptable and accords with the aims of Policy CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

7.3 Amenity

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

It is noted that topographically, 28 Highdown Avenue is located slightly lower than 26 - while 24 is slightly higher (see site photos in the attached annex for details). Neighbour concerns were raised by the owner of 24 with respect to loss of light and privacy. Subsequent changes to the proposed elevations included obscure-glazing on eastern side elevations and a lower ridgeline. This resulted in the proposal no longer causing sunlight or privacy issues for 24 Highdown Avenue and the withdrawal of their objection.

Subsequent to the above analysis, in this instance and based on the sites individual circumstances, the proposed development is deemed to accord with Policy CC8 and Policy H9.

7.4 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.

The Natural Environment Officer indicated there were no objections relating to protected trees or loss of habitat as a result of the proposal. And the proposal is noted to only modestly increase the footprint of the dwelling and in areas already subject to existing conservatory and patio covered areas. The site does not have any protected trees or identified Green Links which could be negatively impacted by the specifics of the proposed development under consideration.

The area was identified as possibly suitable for bats, and the Ecology Officer provided comments indicating they had no objections provided a condition was included requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the details given in section 5.3 of the bat survey report (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy - dated 24/06/2020 - Ref: R2540/a) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Further to a condition along the lines of that suggested by the Ecology Officer, the proposal is not considered likely to 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.

8. CONCLUSION

In light of the above assessment the proposal is considered 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. TL1 Standard time-limit
2. AP1 Standard approved plans
3. M3 Materials as specified
4. PD3 Obscure Glazing
5. C00 Ecologists Condition
6. IF1 Positive and Proactive Working

APPENDIX
Site Photos

Photographs taken in the course of a site visit conducted on the 12th of February 2020.





