

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames

App Ref: 200885/HOU

Address: 25 Grosvenor Road, Reading, RG4 5EN

Proposals: Double storey rear extension, single storey side extension.

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mr Vikram Chugani

Date received: 25/06/2020

Valid from: 02/07/2020

Target Decision date: 27/08/2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is a two-storey detached dwelling on Grosvenor Road, Caversham. Grosvenor Road is a private road, which is characterised as being residential with a mix of large two-storey detached and semi-detached dwellings. Grosvenor Road is accessed via Peppard Road to the west, and Henley Road to the south.

A site visit for this application was not possible due to the Coronavirus lockdown. The applicant supplied site photos on 02/07/2020. These photos were used for the purpose of determining this application.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for a double storey rear extension, single storey side extension, and conversion of existing rear detached garage to gym, shower room and changing room.

Plans considered:

- Block Plan
- Location Plan
- Ground Floor - A101 + A201
- First Floor - A102 + A202
- Loft Plan - A103 + A203
- Roof Plan - A104 + A204
- Section - A105 + A205
- Section - A106 + A206
- Front Elevation - A107 + A207
- East Elevation - A108 + A208
- Rear Elevation - A109 + A209
- West Elevation - A110 + A210

Received on 29/06/2020

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *The following addresses were consulted by letter.*

21 Grosvenor Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5EN - Objection received on 22/07/2020

- This is a huge extension in an already crowded corner of Grosvenor Road. It will be an eyesore / ruin the view from an external patio and whole rear garden.
- The building work, which is close to a re-build of the house, will take well over a year and cause a lot of noise and distress.

23 Grosvenor Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5EN - No consultation response received.

27 Grosvenor Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5EN - Objection received on 22/07/2020

- The kitchen of the property forms the heart of the home, while the garden is a well-used amenity; the proposals will cause a detrimental effect on the outlook from the kitchen window and adjacent garden and the reduction in light levels that it will cause in both cases.
- Lack of consultation prior to being notified of the planning application.
- Whilst there is no objection - in principle - to the extension of No.25, scrutiny of the submitted plans shows that the extension, as proposed here, is disproportionate both to the existing dwelling and its setting. It is oversized in all aspects: section, elevation and particularly in plan, where it doubles the existing footprint at ground floor level. The resulting massing is considered completely inappropriate to this setting.
- In terms of plan and footprint, the applicant has not taken sufficient account of the ground plan of No.27, the stepped nature of its rear elevation at ground floor level and the location of the kitchen and associated window. As can be seen on the accompanying plan view, the wall containing this window is set back some distance from the rest of the rear elevation. If a line is drawn at 45° from the centre of the kitchen window, the proposed six metre extension breaches it by a wide margin and in doing so would be grossly excessive. In order to be acceptable, the extension should be limited in depth so that it does not intrude beyond that 45° line. If the extension is to go beyond the point of intersection, then the flank wall should be stepped-in sufficiently to maintain this compliance. The result in either case would be far less obtrusive to - and take much less light from - No.27.
- In terms of section, the applicant has not taken into account; nor depicted in the drawings - the variation in ground levels between the two dwellings. The ground level to the rear of No.25 is noticeably higher than that to the rear of No.27. There is a corresponding disparity in floor-levels. This has the effect of increasing the relative height of the proposed extension, notwithstanding its pitched roof. This would further exacerbate its over-bearing character and reduce the light levels reaching No.27. In order to reduce this intrusion to an acceptable level, the first floor to the extension would need to be stepped back from the reduced ground floor perimeter.
- In terms of elevations, as viewed from the garden of No.27, the rear elevations to No.25 and No.23 beyond currently have a pleasing visual continuity and homogeneity. If built, this oversized and ill-considered extension would completely disrupt this.

29 Grosvenor Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5EN - No consultation response received.

25 Lady Jane Court, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5EH - No consultation response received.

A site notice was displayed from 4th July 2020, expiring on 25th July 2020 - no further responses have been 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

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

TR3 Access, Traffic and Highways-Related matters

TR5 Car and cycle parking and Electric Vehicle Parking

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

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 existing dwelling house has a footprint of approximately 114m², the proposed development would increase the footprint of the existing dwelling to 183m². The works proposed at ground floor level include a rear extension with a depth of 6m extending more than the full width of the existing dwelling (12.5m). The proposed side extension has a width of 2m, and extends from the front elevation of the existing study to the rear elevation (10m). As such, the proposed works at ground floor level are considered a substantial wraparound side and rear extension. The proposed extensions feature a pitched roof with six Velux windows above the rear extension, and five Velux windows above the side extension. The ground to eaves height of the rear extensions is 2.4m, with a maximum height of 3.3m. The proposed works to the porch include a new pitched roof to account for the side extension, and a new front door, with the removal of an existing porch window.

At first floor level, a full width (10.5m) rear extension is proposed with a depth of 4.5m from the existing first floor rear elevation (as such, the first floor element is not as deep as the ground floor level extension proposed, with this set in 1.5m). The first-floor rear extension features a pitched roof, that is set down from the ridge of the existing roof by 0.7m.

In accordance with the House Extensions SPD, extensions of more than 4m are not normally supported by officers. In this instance, it is considered that the proposal site is potentially capable of being able to accommodate a rear extension with a depth greater than 4m (as it is a considerable property set within a relatively generous plot, therefore providing potential for a larger than normally permitted extension). The size and scale of the proposed rear extension and proximity to the side boundaries of both neighbouring properties, however, are what leads to the consideration that the proposed rear extensions are overbearing to neighbouring residents and would not be subordinate to the existing house either; instead the proposal fails to respect the character and appearance of the existing house, fails to respect the character and patterns of neighbouring properties, and would present an overbearing impact on neighbours, by virtue of the two storey rear addition in particular (thereby contrary to key elements of Policy H9). The House Extensions SPD recommends that rear extensions are located as far from side boundaries as possible to avoid an overbearing impact to neighbouring residents and a loss of light to habitable rooms.

Overall, the proposed works are considered an overdevelopment of the existing dwelling house. This is taking into account the cumulative impact of all aspects of the proposal (ground floor and first floor works). The proposals are considered to drastically alter the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, with all aspects of the proposal combined leading to the view that the proposed works are not subservient. In accordance with policy H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), the proposed development is not considered to respect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling or surrounding area by virtue of the size and scale of the proposed works.

In terms of detailed design matters, the proposal includes brickwork/roof tiles to match existing and the replacement first floor windows align with the existing character. At ground floor level more significantly sized panes of glazing are proposed to link the house with the rear amenity space. Although a more contemporary feature, there are no inherent concerns with this element of the proposal. Had the proposals been supported, a compliance condition would have secured the materials detailed on the application form/drawings.

The proposals would decrease the size of the rear amenity space; however, a suitably sized garden would remain, so no concerns are raised in relation to Policy H10.

The proposed development also includes the conversion of the existing rear detached garage to a gym, shower room and changing room. The development of the garage mainly consists of internal alterations, while external alterations consist of the insertion of three Velux windows to the roof and the rearrangement of existing windows and doors. The proposed works to the garage are considered in themselves to be acceptable, as the proposal does not drastically alter the appearance of the existing structure. The additions of windows and rearrangement of doors are considered to respect the character of the existing outbuilding.

7.2 Design and the Public Realm

Proposed developments of the size and scale are not considered characteristic of the surrounding area. Whilst mindful that there is an existing rear conservatory and side elevation pergola, the two storey rear extension and single storey wraparound side extension represent significant changes in the context of the existing situation. The proposed works are considered intrusive to the open views to the rear of properties along Grosvenor Road, particularly along the rear building line between 19 and 25 Grosvenor Road. The proposed development is not considered subservient to the existing dwelling in terms of size and scale, and would harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding area.

The proposal is not considered appropriate in its scale and massing 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).

7.3 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.

With regards to number 27 Grosvenor Road, the proposed development is considered to appear overbearing to the neighbouring property by virtue of the size, scale and bulk of the proposal. An

objection to the proposal was raised on behalf of number 27, which highlights concerns regarding loss of light to the property as a result of the development. It has not been demonstrated within the plans that there would not be a detrimental loss of light to the ground floor window serving the kitchen at 27 Grosvenor Road, bearing in mind the 45 degree tests detailed within the House Extensions SPD would clearly be breached (also evidenced in the objection received from the neighbour - summarised above and illustrated in part below). While it is acknowledged that it appears that the proposed development would be partly obscured from the kitchen window at number 27 by trees to the side boundary along 25 Grosvenor Road, the proposed development would become noticeable and may result in a loss of light to the kitchen should the trees be removed or pruned. Although this is a south facing window, the proposals have the effect of creating a form of a tunnelling effect at this point, given the sheer scale and dominance of the single and two-storey additions proposed. The applicant has failed to provide justification to demonstrate there would not be a harmful impact in this regard.

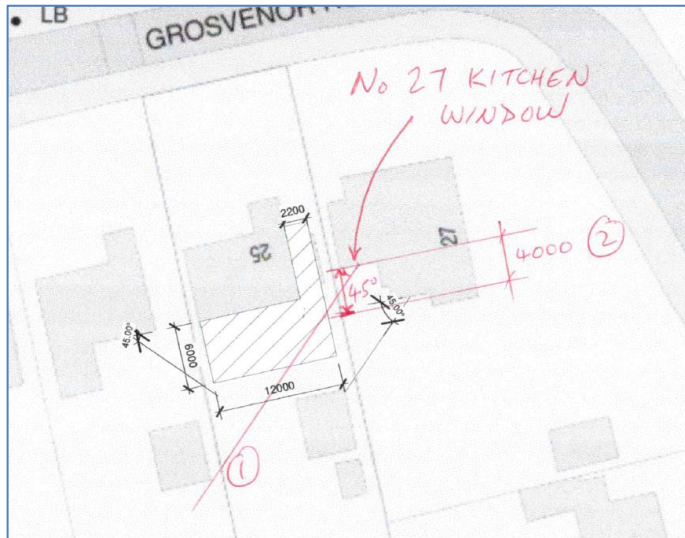


Fig 1. Annotated Block Plan demonstrating loss of light to habitable room at 27 Grosvenor Road (supplied to support objection from 27 Grosvenor Road)



Fig 2. Aerial photo of rear of 25 Grosvenor Road in relation to 27 Grosvenor Road. Window to habitable room circled in red. (image obtained from Google Maps on 25/08/2020)

Notwithstanding, it is considered that the proposed development would also appear overbearing to number 27 and would harm the outlook from the property. Although the proposed development is set back from the boundary to 27 Grosvenor Road by 1m, it is considered that the proposed development would have an overbearing impact to views from the rear elevation of 27 Grosvenor Road due to the height and scale of the proposed rear and side extensions.

The proposed development is considered to harm the outlook and appear overbearing to 23 Grosvenor Road, due to the size and scale of the proposed ground floor and first floor rear extensions. It is acknowledged that the proposed block plan does demonstrate using the 45° angle that there would not be a loss of light significant loss of light to the nearest habitable windows at number 23. Despite this being demonstrated, and fully acknowledging that the footprint of No. 23 is set off the boundary with the host property it is considered that the harm to the living conditions at number 23 results from the overbearing impact of the proposed ground and first floor rear extensions. In particular, the proposed side elevation fully demonstrates that at a depth of 6m at ground floor level, combined with a 4.5m deep extension at first floor level, the proposed extension on the boundary with No. 23 would be visually dominant and overbearing, as well as harming outlook, for existing and future occupiers of the neighbouring property.

With regards to the impact of the proposal on 21 Grosvenor Road (objection to the proposal raised by resident, as summarised above); it is acknowledged that the proposal would alter the view from this property (however, there is no specific right to a view through planning), however, the separation distance between the proposed development and number 21 is considered as such that

the impact would not be as harmful as to number 23 and 27. The separation distance between number 21 and the proposal site is such that the impact of the proposed development would not harm the living conditions at number 21 to the point of refusal alone. This also applied to 29 Grosvenor Road, for which the rear boundary adjoins the side boundary to 25 Grosvenor Road.

The rear of the proposal site adjoins the access road to Lady Jane Court. The front elevation of 25 Lady Jane Court faces the rear of 25 Grosvenor Road, where the majority of the proposed works are to take place. It is considered that the separation distance between the two dwellings alleviates for the most part any concerns that the proposed development would be harmful to the outlook from 25 Lady Jane Court. The same also applies to 31 Grosvenor Road, and 24 Lady Jane Court.

Overall, the proposed development is considered unneighbourly, overbearing and would harm the outlook to neighbouring properties in particular 23 and 27 Grosvenor Road. 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.

It is also recognised that the proposed works would improve the quality of accommodation for current and future occupiers, creating an enlarged kitchen at ground floor level and a fifth bedroom at first floor level. The conversion of the garage for ancillary accommodation (which would have been secured as such via condition had the proposal been supported) also improves the accommodation. In the planning balance however, the harmful design and amenity impacts identified above are considered to outweigh any planning benefits of the scheme.

7.4 Transport

Although the proposals involve the loss of a garage, sufficient space to the front of the site (off the private Grosvenor Road) is maintained for sufficient car parking for the property.

Although the works are fairly significant, they are not of a scale or nature to warrant a demolition and construction method statement to be secured via condition, had the proposals been supported by officers.

7.5 CIL

Had the proposals been able to be supported by officers, a CIL form (and plans to evidence the floorspace created) would have been requested to have been submitted, as it is considered likely that the floorspace created would be close to 100sqm, at which point the proposals would have been CIL liable.

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 dwelling. 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 dwelling. 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 loss of light to neighbouring residents. This could possibly be achieved through reducing the depths of ground floor and first floor rear extensions, and setting the rear extensions further off of the side boundaries.

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 development, owing to its scale, bulk and massing, would fail to respect, maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area, contrary to Policies CC7 and H9 of the [Reading Borough Local Plan \(Adopted November 2019\)](#).
2. The proposed development would cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of neighbouring properties by being visually dominant, overbearing and harm outlook to No's 23 & 27 Grosvenor Road, and the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the proposal would not harmfully reduce access to daylight and sunlight to a habitable room at ground floor level of No. 27 Grosvenor Road, contrary to Policies CC8 and H9 of the [Reading Borough Local Plan \(Adopted November 2019\)](#).

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 Plan
- Location Plan
- Ground Floor - A101 + A201
- First Floor - A102 + A202
- Loft Plan - A103 + A203
- Roof Plan - A104 + A204
- Section - A105 + A205
- Section - A106 + A206
- Front Elevation - A107 + A207
- East Elevation - A108 + A208
- Rear Elevation - A109 + A209
- West Elevation - A110 + A210

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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