

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park

App Ref: 200901/HOU

Address: 56 Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1JJ

Proposals: Single storey front extension, two storey rear extension, garage conversion to create annex and front porch.

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Ms Perry Millett

Date received (valid from): 29/06/2020

Target Decision date: 24/08/2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling on Wokingham Road, between Bulmershe Road and College Road. The surrounding area is considered residential with a mix of two-storey semi-detached dwellings and terraced rows.

A site visit for this application was not possible due to the Coronavirus lockdown. The applicant supplied site photos on 03/07/2020. These photos were used for the purpose of determining this application.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for a single storey front extension, two storey rear extension, garage conversion to create annex and front porch. The block plan shows 3 off-road parking spaces. The proposal creates an annex, with it being evident from the floor plan this could fairly simply be altered in the future to form a separate residential unit.

Plans considered:

- Existing/Proposed Plans & Elevations - 1654-A.01 Rev 05
- Location & Block Plan - 1654-A.03 Rev 02

Received on 29/06/2020

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *The following addresses were consulted by letter.*

54 Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1JJ
58 Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1JJ
Flat 1, 3 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5RH
Flat 2, 3 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5RH
Flat 3, 3 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5RH
Flat 4, 3 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5RH
Flat 5, 3 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5RH
Flat 6, 3 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5RH
Flat 7, 3 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5RH
Flat 8, 3 Bulmershe Road, Reading, RG1 5RH
Reading Borough Council, Transport

No consultation responses have been received for this application.

A site notice was displayed from 19th July 2020, expiring on 9th August 2020 - no 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
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
TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters
TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicles Parking

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 *Land use*

Policy H9 details that ancillary accommodation will be acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately. Paragraph 4.4.76 of the supporting text details that ancillary accommodation could be considered a separate dwelling where it:

- Is self-sufficient in terms of facilities (e.g. kitchens and bathrooms);
- Has its own front door without internal links to the main house; and/or
- Has its own external facilities e.g. access, drive, garden; or has scope for these external facilities to be easily created.

The supporting text details that planning conditions, and where necessary, obligations will ensure that extra accommodation remains ancillary to the main dwelling.

In this instance the applicant has specified the proposals will create an annex, while the floor plans detail the 'new' elements are self-sufficient. However, the access would be shared within the proposed porch and other facilities (drive / garden) are shared too (although they could possibly be separated in the future). In the circumstances, had the proposals been able to be supported a condition would have secured the use as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling.

7.2 Design & amenity space

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 includes the conversion of existing garage to kitchen/dining room, a forward extension with porch and a two-storey rear and side extension.

The proposed front extension / porch / conversion of the garage are not considered to be particularly characterful of the property, but in themselves are considered to be fairly modest additions which are not considered to be harmful to the extent to resist the proposals on (bearing in mind there is no fixed front building line along this part of Wokingham Road and the prevailing context nearby).

Turning to consider the two-storey side and rear extension, although this is acknowledged to be set back from the front elevation and streetscene, it is considered to represent a contrived design, as the side elevation follows the angle of the plot. What results is a first floor side and rear extension that is considered to appear out of place and not contribute positively to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling. As per Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), the proposed development is not considered appropriate in terms of scale, or respond positively to local character. While it is acknowledged that the proposed development would be partly obscured by a large conifer to the front of 54 Wokingham Road, the proposed development would become noticeable from the highway should the conifer be removed or pruned. The form and location of the proposed extension is also unusual, in being set back from the vast majority of the depth of the host property, and this results in an uncomfortable relationship between the host building, the extension and the neighbouring property at No. 54. The result is an incoherent appearance in the streetscene. It unfortunately appears that the proposal have been designed to simply seek to maximise the proposed floorspace, rather than responding positively to the character of the existing house or local context.

In addition, the proposed works to the ground floor are not considered to be subservient to the existing dwelling due to the size and scale of the works proposed. The proposed ground floor rear and side extension has a depth of 5m from the rear of the existing shower room, and has a width of 5.8m. The distance between the rear elevation of the ground floor side and rear extension and the rear boundary of the property is 2.3m. The proposed development within the rear garden is considered to contribute to an unacceptable loss of quality usable outdoor space at 56 Wokingham Road. Policy H10 details that the design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity. The supporting text at paragraph 4.4.84 clarifies that that house extensions that would result in a loss of outdoor space will also be judged against Policy H10. Policy CC8 is also relevant in that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties. Set within this context, the amount of usable rear amenity space is almost halving (the remaining 2.3m depth to the boundary beyond the extension is unlikely to be usable in practice) and this would compare unfavourably with the predominant prevailing character in the local area, where more generous amounts of rear amenity space are retained. Whilst acknowledging the proximity of the application site to the large expanse of open space nearby at Palmer Park, the proposals are considered contrary to Policies H10 and CC8 in this regard and this forms a further reason for refusal of the application.

Notwithstanding the issues noted above, in terms of detailed design the proposals appear to include materials which match those of the existing building (as shown on the elevation plans and stated on the application form). Had the proposals been able to be supported by officers, a

condition would have been included specifying the materials to match those of the existing house (to comply with Policies CC7 and H9).

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 various factors, including:

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

The proposed development is not considered to harm the living conditions at the neighbouring adjoining property 58 Wokingham Road. This is due to the location and separation distance of the proposed works in relation to the nearest habitable windows and outdoor amenity space at 58 Wokingham Road.

With regards to 54 Wokingham Road, the proposed two-storey rear and side extension would be set against the boundary of this neighbouring property. However, this aligns with the side elevation of the neighbouring property (single storey lean-to side extension and two storey side elevation of the property), with the only above ground floor window likely to serve a staircase or landing. As such, the two-storey addition would not be harmful to the neighbouring property in amenity regards, with the rear amenity space at this neighbouring property not being significantly overlooked due to the angle of orientation involved with the single window on the proposed rear elevation of the first floor element. A window is also proposed on the front elevation of the two-storey extension, but this is shown to serve a staircase, so could be obscure glazed and, in any event, is unlikely to result in significant overlooking to the front amenity space of No. 54 at this point. The ground floor front extension / porch extension is not considered to result in a loss of amenity to No. 54 to warrant the refusal of this application on these grounds. As this element includes a large area of flat roof, had the proposals been able to be supported, a condition would have specified that access to the flat roof would have only been for maintenance only (and not be used as a roof terrace), to protect amenity.

In terms of the impact on 3 Bulmershe Road, it is noted that a new window is proposed at first floor level, 2.3m back from the boundary. However, it is evident that the rear most part of 3 Bulmershe Road serves parking spaces, so the loss of amenity at this point is not considered so great to warrant the refusal of the application on this ground.

For current and future occupiers of the proposed dwelling, it is acknowledged that the proposed works would significantly improve the quality of accommodation. However, when applying a critical planning balance to all material considerations, these acknowledged benefits are not considered to outweigh the harmful impacts referenced elsewhere in this assessment.

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.

7.5 Transport

The loss of the garage is noted, but this in itself is not an in-principle concern. Moreover, the proposals show three vehicle parking spaces on the proposed site plan, albeit this involves tandem parking. Officers are mindful that only two vehicle parking spaces are required for a four-bedroom dwelling within Zone 2, as stated in the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011), and therefore it is concluded that suitable off-street parking is maintained at the property as a result of the proposed works.

8. CONCLUSION

Overall, the proposed two-storey side and rear extension 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. It is acknowledged that the challenges facing the proposal were due to the orientation of the existing dwelling and the angle of the site. This resulted in a proposed first floor side and rear extension that appears contrived and not sympathetic to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling in terms of its siting.

It is also considered that the proposed development would lead to an unacceptable decrease in quality usable amenity space at the host property. Whilst mindful of the benefits additional accommodation would provide for current and future occupiers, when applying a critical planning balance to all material considerations, the benefits of the scheme are not considered to outweigh the harmful impacts.

Officers did advise the agent of these shortcomings and this conclusion, setting out possible steps as to how such issues could be addressed in a future separate application and providing the opportunity to withdraw the application (with view to a future revised re-submission). The agent was issued a deadline for which to confirm if the application is to be withdrawn in order to explore other options, written confirmation withdrawing the application was not forthcoming. Hence the above conclusion reached on the application, on the basis of the information submitted and consideration of all material matters.

9. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

Permission is not granted due to the following reasons:

1. The proposed two-storey rear and side extension, by reason of its width, depth and resultant scale and massing, fails to respect, maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the host dwelling, contrary to Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019).
2. The proposed two-storey rear and side extension, by reason of its footprint, would result in an unacceptable reduction in outdoor space which fails to respect the size and character of similar spaces in the vicinity, contrary to Policies CC8 and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019).

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:

- Existing/Proposed Plans & Elevations - 1654-A.01 Rev 05
- Location & Block Plan - 1654-A.03 Rev 02

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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