

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 201126/HOU

Address: 1 Links Drive

Proposal: Two storey side extension

Agreed Target Date: 06/11/20

Case officer: Connie Davis

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application site is a two storey semi-detached dwelling with a hipped roof. The dwelling benefits from a short single storey rear projection and a rear conservatory. The dwelling is located on a spur off Links Drive, accessed via a footpath only. Vehicle parking is located outside the curtilage of the site, beyond the end of the rear garden, with direct access to Links Drive. The dwelling fronts Norcot Road, set comfortably above the highway as the site topography rises in an easterly direction. The site splays out to the frontage, with the dwelling oriented towards the neighbouring dwelling at 224a Norcot Road. The surrounding area is predominantly residential. The neighbouring dwelling at 224a Norcot Road is a later addition to the street scene, with planning permission granted in 1998.



The application site (left) and 224a Norcot Road (right)

Proposal

The proposal is for a two-storey side extension. The proposal would be set back from the principal elevation by 0.5m at first floor level, extending at a width of 3.3m at the front elevation which then reduces towards the rear due to the staggered design. It would have a depth of the entire original side elevation, which is staggered meaning the width of the property reduces towards the rear. A distance of 4m would be maintained to the boundary with 224a Norcot Road at its widest point (at the front of the property) which reduces to around 1m towards the rear (this is due to the orientation of the plots). The proposal would have a hipped roof to match the main property gable roof with a maximum height of 6.7m and a height to eaves of 4.9m. The proposal would be set down from the ridgeline of the existing roof by 2m.

To the front elevation, a window would be located at the ground floor with a further window located at the first floor. To the side elevation, a window and

single door would be located at the ground floor. To the rear elevation, windows would be located at the ground and first floors.

Materials have been selected to match those of the existing dwelling.

Plans Considered

The agent supplied the following:

PL-03 Rev A - Rev A Existing and Proposed Block Plan

PL-06 Rev A - Rev A Proposed Site Plan

PL-07 Rev A - Rev A Proposed Plans

PL-08 Rev A - Rev A Proposed Elevations

Received 3rd November 2020

PL-01 - Location Plan

PL-04 - Existing Plans

PL-05 - Existing Elevations

Received 10th August 2020

Relevant Planning History

191000/CLP - Loft conversion with hip to gable roof alteration and flat roof rear Dormer - Certificate Granted

190988/HOU - Two storey side extension - Application Refused due to design and impact on neighbours in terms of visual dominance and overbearing impact. Appeal Dismissed (appeal ref: APP/E0345/D/19/3237818).

Concerns over the design were agreed with by the inspector. However, it was not considered that the proposal would result in substantial harm to neighbouring amenity.

181932/HOU - Single storey rear extension, patio and retaining wall - Application Permitted

181802/HPA - Single storey rear extension - Application Withdrawn

181789/HOU - Two storey side extension - Refused due to design, capability of being used as a separate dwelling and impact on neighbours in terms of visual dominance and overbearing impact

011427/FUL - Two storey side and single storey rear extension - Permitted

Consultation Responses

Internal Consultees:

No internal consultees were consulted on this application.

External Consultation

The following addresses were formally consulted via letter:

224 and 224a Norcot Road

2 and 5 Links Drive

1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 Lawrence Road

One letter of objection was received from no. 224a Norcot Road with regard to the following:

- Proximity of the extension to the shared boundary
- Loss of light to bathroom and kitchen window
- The extension would have an overbearing impact on amenity space
- Reference to the previously refused applications and does not see that this scheme has materially changed

***Officer comment:** See appraisal for discussion on impact of this neighbouring property with reference to the previously refused applications.*

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent

The agent was contacted to request that the width of the extension be reduced from 3.8m to 3m so as to remain in proportion with the main house and adjoining semi. The width of the extension was an issue upheld by the Inspector at appeal (which was also 3.8m) due to it being more than half the width of the main house. A compromise was reached at 3.3m which was considered the limit of acceptability. Due to the revised width, a ground floor rear window could no longer be inserted, so instead has been placed on the side elevation.

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.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

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

National Planning Policy Framework;
National Planning Policy Guidance;

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions (2003)

Appraisal Checklist

H9 states: An extension to a house will be acceptable where it:

- A. Respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design;

To assess this, the following has been considered - would the proposal:

- Detract from the appearance of the original building through the use of ill-matching materials and by not fitting in with the design, scale and proportions of the original building; **NO, the proposed design is considered acceptable and has overcome the issues identified in previous applications.** The extension is set down from the ridge, set back from the front elevation and has a matching roof form to the main dwelling. The width of the extension has also been reduced by 0.5m. However, given the scale of the proposal combined with the extant permissions at the site which could also be implemented (single storey rear extension and loft conversion), it is considered appropriate to remove Class A and B Permitted Development rights so this extension could not be made larger at ground or first floor level via the Permitted Development route. This is to ensure the dwelling does not become any larger without a full assessment from the LPA to ensure that any further development would be appropriate with the scale and design of the original house.
 - Reduce the amount of usable amenity space for the property to an unacceptable degree; **NO**
 - Require the loss of trees in the garden or put significant trees at risk; **NO**
- B. 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;
- & C. Does not present an overbearing impact on neighbours or a large blank façade to public areas

To assess this, the following has been considered - would the proposal:

- Significantly reduce the amount of daylight and sunlight enjoyed by neighbouring properties; **NO. The two adjacent properties to the application site will be considered.**

No. 2 Links Drive (to the east)

It is not considered that the proposal would impact this neighbouring property to a substantial degree. This is due to the side extension being positioned on the western elevation and would not extend past the existing rear building line.

No. 224a Norcot Road (to the west)

Concern has been raised by this neighbour over the loss of light to a ground floor kitchen window and a first-floor bathroom window facing the application site. It should be noted that bathrooms are not considered habitable rooms, as per the Council's Design Guide to House Extensions SPG (2003). As such, access to light in this room is not a formal material consideration. However it should be noted that the extension would not breach a line of 45 degrees taken to the north-east so it is still considered that the window would receive acceptable level of light.

With regards to the side kitchen window at the neighbouring property, it is noted that this has not been positioned in the side elevation of the property in accordance with the approved plans for when the property was built (it should be positioned closer to the side door and was approved to serve a utility room). The property also does not have permitted development rights to insert new windows or doors facing the application site. From the floor plans of the original property, it is assumed that the kitchen is served by another, larger window to the front of the property which would be considered its primary source of light. Nevertheless, the impact on this window is still a consideration given it has been noted in the objection as serving a kitchen window and internal reconfiguration could have occurred following the granting of planning permission.

It is still considered that this ground floor side kitchen window would receive an acceptable level of light, with the extension not breaching a line of 45 degrees taken to the north-east. Due to being at ground floor level, the window already experiences some light restrictions (due to the existing property and boundary treatment), and so it is not considered that the proposal would result in a substantial additional level of loss of light that would warrant refusal of the application on that basis.

- Invade the privacy of neighbouring properties through overlooking from windows or balconies; **NO**, one ground floor side window and door is proposed but this is not considered to result in a substantial loss of privacy to no. 224a Norcot Road to warrant refusal given that a 2m high boundary fence could be erected between the sites without planning permission. A condition would be placed on the permission preventing any further windows or doors being placed on the western side elevation without separate planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.
- Detract from the character of neighbouring properties through siting, excessive bulk, ill-matching materials or inconsistent design; **NO**, the proposal is considered of an acceptable scale and design and to have largely overcome the issues associated with the previous applications regarding this matter. The side extension is considered acceptable in relation to the main house and the adjoining semi after being reduced in width by 0.5m and the roof form now in keeping with the main house. As such, the proposal would not be considered be overly bulky or unbalance the pair of semis, as was concluded under previous applications.

- Detract from the appearance of the street or area by using ill-matched materials, glazing and detailing; **NO**, materials are proposed to match the host dwelling.

D. Does not result in a loss of biodiversity within garden - **NO**

E. Ancillary accommodation, such as granny annexes, will be acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately - **NO**, from the floor plans provided, it is not considered that the extension could be used as a separate residential dwelling due to the first floor being unable to be accessed without entering the main house. The ground floor can be accessed independently via the side door. However, in order to further ensure that it could not be used as a separate annex following any internal alterations, a condition will be placed on the permission stating the extension must remain ancillary to the main dwellinghouse at all times.

CC8: states: Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking; **No, as discussed**
- Access to sunlight and daylight; **No, as discussed**
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; **No**, the concerns of no. 224a Norcot Road have been acknowledged and indeed the previously approved applications for a two-storey side extension were refused for a reason relating to the extension's height, bulk and proximity to the shared boundary. However, this reason for refusal was not supported by the Planning Inspector at appeal (only the issues with the design of the extension in relation to the street scene upheld the refusal of the application). It was noted by the Inspector that:

'Given the angled location of the appeal property to No 224a and the gap that would remain between the side elevation of the extension and the side of this property, I consider that the extension would not be overbearing on the outlook from the windows and doors in the side of No 224a to the degree that it would make the rooms that these features serve less pleasant to use.'

The extension would not extend significantly beyond the rear elevation of No 224a, beyond which is this property's private garden. The staggered design of the extension and its relationship to rear facing windows and the rear garden area of No 224a would ensure that it would not be overbearing or make the rear rooms or garden less pleasant to use.'

The above decision by the Inspector is a material consideration in determining this application, and it seems unreasonable to refuse once again for this reason given the above conclusion. The above also naturally addresses the remaining concerns raised in the neighbouring objection. It should also be noted that this application has moved the extension off the neighbouring boundary (at the front) by an additional 0.5m, creating a gap of 4m which again would make a default case to argue it would once again prove an overbearing development due to its proximity to the neighbour.

- Harm to outlook; **No, as discussed above.**
- Noise and disturbance; **No**
- Artificial lighting; **No**
- Vibration; **No**
- Dust and fumes; **No**
- Smell; **No**
- Crime and safety; **No or**
- Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys - **N/A.**

Other Matters

Cumulative Development

It is noted that the site has several extant permissions that could be implemented as well as this approval (a single storey rear extension and loft conversion). However, the rear extension is considered of an acceptable and policy compliant depth (4m), and the works to the loft qualified as Permitted Development. It should be noted that the rear extension would not extend beyond the proposed two storey side extension, but the original house, closest to no. 2 Links Drive. As such, it is considered that this proposal is considered acceptable in relation to the extant permission but is at the limit of acceptability. The removal of permitted development rights to enlarge the property further will also help control and restrict any further development without separate planning permission being granted.

Conclusion

The proposed development would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the site or its surroundings and would not have a detrimental impact on the original building or neighbouring properties. As such the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with CC7 (Design and the Public Realm), CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) along with the Councils Supplementary Planning Guidance A Design Guide to House Extensions (2003).

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PERMISSION

Conditions

1. TL1 - 3 year time limit.
2. Approved plans
3. Matching materials
4. Ancillary use
5. Removal of Class A and B PD rights
6. No additional windows or doors on side elevation

Informatives

1. Terms

2. Building Control
3. Construction & Demolition
4. Encroachment
5. Positive and Proactive

1HA