

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: 14 Zinzan Street
Application No: 200069/FUL
Applicant: Mr David Kayani
Proposal: Rear dormer
Target Date: 12/03/20
Case Officer: Connie Davis

1.Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a three storey mid-terrace property located on the west side of Zinzan Street. The property is currently in use as flats although there is no record of this conversion having planning permission or Certificate of Lawfulness being granted. The property is located within the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area and an air quality management area.

The surrounding area is residential and comprises of terrace properties.

2. The Proposal

The proposal comprises of a rear flat roof dormer. It would measure a width of 3.5m, height of 1.5m, depth of 2m and would be set off the eaves of the property by 0.5m. It would be finished in tiles to match the main property and white upvc windows.

A larger dormer than that proposed under this application has already been constructed and is subject to an enforcement investigation. The unauthorised dormer was refused planning permission (see planning history) and so this proposal is put forward as an alternative scheme.

The application was due to be presented to Councillors at the Planning Applications Committee after being called in by members. However, given the Covid-19 outbreak, Councillors have confirmed this application can be determined by officers under delegated powers to reduce the number of cases having to be presented.

3. Consultation

Internal Consultation

Heritage Consultant

Objection - The proposal would disrupt the roof line of the existing building, appearing out of character with the predominant roofscape of properties on the western side of Zinzan Street. As such, the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC)

No comments received.

External Consultation

The following addresses were formally consulted via letter on 27/01/20:

12 & 16 Zinzan Street
17 Waylen Street

In addition, a site notice was displayed between 30th January - 20th February 2020.

No responses have been received.

4. Plans and Documents Considered

The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following plans & documents:

PJSA-01-01 - Location Plan
PJSA-02-01 - Site Plan
PJSA-03-E01 - Existing Plan. Elevation and Section
PJSA-03-01 - Proposed Plans, Elevations and Section
Design and Access Statement

Received 17th January 2020

Email received 12th March 2020 from the applicant's agent

5. Relevant Planning History

190769 - Rear dormer - Application Refused

6. Discussions with applicant/ agent

The agent was advised of the concerns relating to the proposal in relation to the Conservation Area. It was explained that the western side of Zinzan Street was not characterised by authorised rear dormers and so it is considered the development would disrupt the prevailing roofscape. In addition, the status of the Conservation Area being 'at risk' was also of concern combined with the recognised 'negative feature' of the Conservation Area which is poorly designed dormers. Should this application be permitted, it may begin to set a precedent for flat roof dormers which is also not considered an acceptable form of design given the location and its designation.

The agent was advised that if not withdrawn, the application would be recommended for refusal. No response was received from the agent and therefore has led to a recommendation of refusal.

7. 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.

8. Relevant Planning 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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Plan (2019).

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ('NPPF') 2012 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

9. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

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
EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

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

Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (2020)

10. Appraisal

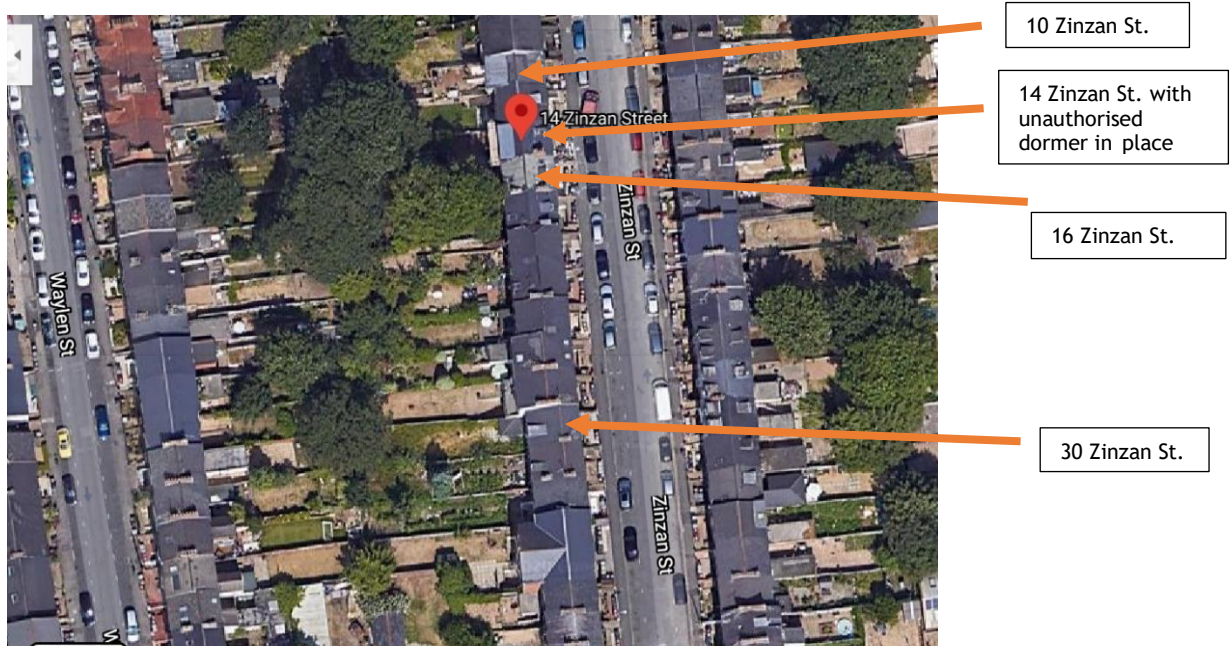
- 1) Principle of Development
- 2) Design considerations and impact on the character of the Conservation Area
- 3) Impact on the Street Scene
- 4) Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

1) Principle of Development

14 Zinzan Street sits within a terrace of properties of similar scale and design. Surrounding properties on the western side are not characterised by rear dormers. From images of the site, and a search of the planning history of the entirety of Zinzan Street, it appears that only 2 rear dormers have been permitted (at no. 16 and no. 30). It should be noted that these were granted permission in excess of 10 years ago when proposals would have been assessed under previous planning policies and guidance.

The rear dormer permitted at the adjacent property (no. 16) appears to have either not been implemented or has been removed. In any case, the permission which granted in 2009 has now expired. The dormer at no. 30 is a single window dormer which was granted permission in 1998. There is an excessively large dormer at no. 10, although there is no

record of this having planning permission or qualifying as permitted development.



Satellite image of the western side of Zinzan Street

As such, the prevailing rear roofscape is not overwhelmed with authorised development in the form of dormers. The applicant's agent, within their Design and Access Statement, has referred to a number of applications which have been permitted which relate to rear dormers. However, a number of these developments were not associated with the western side of Zinzan Street, but other streets within the wider Conservation Area. Each application is assessed on its own merits and in relation to its specific context; in this case, the western side of Zinzan Street. Approved developments in other streets across Reading is not considered a strong justification for why this proposal, in this specific location, is acceptable. In any case, a large number of the applications referred to by the applicant's agent are also dated and as such would have been assessed under previous policies as opposed to the new Reading Local Plan and Conservation Area Appraisal.

The principle of development is also not supported by the Council's Heritage Consultant who also noted that this development would disrupt the prevailing roofscape which is considered to be detrimental to the surrounding Conservation Area, which has been designated 'at risk'. Further discussion on this matter is provided in the next section of this report.

2) Design considerations and impact on the character of the Conservation Area

In accordance with policy H9 extensions should *'respect the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and appearance of the street as a whole.'*

Policy CC7 also states that *'all development must be of high quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located'*

Policy EN3 states that *'The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness'*. In addition, *'where a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been adopted for a*

particular Conservation Area, this will be a material consideration in determining applications for development.

The Supplementary Planning Guidance - 'A Design Guide to House Extensions' gives specific guidance on the design of rear dormers. In summary, dormers should be set adequately within the roof slope, down from the ridge and off the eaves. They should also be in proportion with the rest of the house and suitably designed in relation to surrounding properties.

The Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area was placed on Historic England's listing of "Heritage at Risk" at the end of 2018. As well as providing detail on the historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area, the appraisal highlights those issues that have resulted in this designation and which accordingly need to be managed, and provides suggestions for better protecting and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area in the years ahead. 'Negative' features of the Conservation Area are listed, one of these being '*architecturally unsympathetic extensions and alterations including poor quality dormers*' (page 9). It is considered that proposals put forward should be of high quality design to support and enhance the Conservation Area and move it away from the "at risk" status.

In terms of design, the proposal is considered an improvement on the dormer that has been constructed unlawfully and for which planning permission was previously refused. The proposed dormer now sits more centrally within the roof slope and set away from the eaves of the roof which is considered more in accordance with Policy H9 and the Supplementary Design Guidance. It will be finished in tiles to match the main property and will have upvc windows. Overall the dormer's design is fairly standard but is not considered the highest quality of design.

Nevertheless, it is considered that the design of the proposal, whilst acknowledged is fairly common, would not be a suitable addition to the Conservation Area given its "at risk" status and the efforts that are being made to improve and enhance the area. This is particularly due to the flat roof. The applicant's agent has noted a number of flat roof dormers in the vicinity, but openly acknowledges that these 'have been constructed with no evident planning permission'. It is not considered that unauthorised developments of low quality design and finish is justification for approving a dormer of the same/ similar type, and this would negate the efforts that are being made to prevent these developments which contribute to the acknowledged 'negative features' of the Conservation Area. Such a style of dormer would set a precedent in this location, and although a potential design improvement could have been two smaller dormers with pitched roofs to reduce the overall bulk of development, this would not combat the concerns over the principle of development as already discussed.

As such, the proposal, in terms of design, is not considered to be suitable in relation to Policy EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) for the reasons above.

3) Impact on the Street Scene

The proposed dormer would not be visible from Zinzan Street. The site backs on to the rear gardens of properties in Waylen Street, although again, the dormer would not be visible from Waylen Street itself. As such, the proposal is not considered harmful to the street scene and not in conflict with Policy CC7 in this regard.

4) Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CC8 states that development will only be acceptable if it *“will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties”*

It is not considered that the dormer would cause adverse impact to adjoining neighbours at 12 and 16 Zinzan Street. This is due to the positioning within the roof not conflicting with any windows of these dwellings.

The site also faces on to no. 17 Waylen Street. However the application site and this property are separated by over 40m which is considered sufficient to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy for this neighbour.

As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of Policy CC8.

Conclusion

To conclude, the proposed dormer is considered to disrupt the roofscape of the wider terrace. In addition, the design, by way of its flat roof, is not considered a sensitive addition to the area. Given the ‘at risk’ status of the Conservation Area and the requirements of Policy EN3 to enhance and preserve Reading’s conservation areas, the proposal is not considered acceptable in this specific location.

Recommendation

REFUSE planning permission for the following reason:

1. The proposed development would be considered uncharacteristic and out of keeping with the prevailing roofscape of the wider terrace on the western side of Zinzan Street. In addition, by way of its flat roof design, the dormer would not represent a sensitive addition that would enhance or preserve the Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area which has been placed on Historic England’s listing of ‘Heritage at Risk’. As such, the proposal is considered contrary to Policy EN3 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019), the Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (2020) and A Design Guide to House Extensions (2003)

Informatives

1. The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following plans & documents:

PJSA-01-01 - Location Plan
PJSA-02-01 - Site Plan
PJSA-03-E01 - Existing Plan. Elevation and Section
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2. The local planning authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to inform them of the issues this application presented. The applicant was informed that the application would be refused if not withdrawn, however the applicant did not wish to withdraw the application.

3. 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