

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham

App Ref: 200595/HOU

Address: 71 Briants Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AS

Proposals: Single storey side extension to form wet room and bedroom.

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mr Clink

Date received (valid from): 23/04/2020

Target Decision date: Extension of time on decision granted from 18/06/2020 to 26/06/2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is a two storey end of terrace dwelling and a fenced in parcel of land, located in Caversham along Briants Avenue, opposite the junction with Marsack Street. Immediately to the north of the site is a pedestrian path which leads to Star Road (to the east). Briants Avenue is within a predominantly residential area, consisting of mostly similarly designed terraced houses, with the exception of some semi-detached dwellings to the North and South of Briants Avenue (e.g. No's 73 and 75 to the north of the pedestrian path are a semi-detached pair). 71 Briants Avenue is within flood zone 3 and an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The application site building is not listed, nor located within a conservation area. No. 82 Star Road (visible from the junction of Marsack Street and Briants Avenue along the pedestrian path) is Grade II listed.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for a single storey side extension to form a wet room and bedroom to a two-storey end of terrace dwelling.

In a letter accompanying the application it has been stated that "The client is an 87 year old man who is having difficulty getting up and down the stairs and needs assistance for washing purposes. The proposal will provide a ground floor bedroom and wet room and doors have been widened as necessary for access purposes."

Plans considered:

~~Existing & Proposed Plans & Elevations 01~~

- Re: 71 Briants Avenue, Caversham, Reading. - Letter dated 23rd April 2020

Received on 23/04/2020

~~Existing & Proposed Plans & Elevations 01-A~~

Received on 15/06/2020

~~Existing & Proposed Plans & Elevations 01-B~~

- Floor Risk Assessment at 71 Briants Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AS

Received on 19/06/2020

- Existing & Proposed Plans & Elevations - 01-C

Received on 22/06/2020

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Pre-application advice was provided on 22nd May 2019 for the proposed erection of a linked terrace house at the site.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *The following addresses were consulted by letter.*

69 Briants Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AS - No response received.

71 Star Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5BE - No response received.

73a Star Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5BE - No response received.

73b Star Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5BE - No response received.

Reading Borough Council, Transport - Response received on 29/05/2020

- *There is no off road parking associated with this property, the development site is located in an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area; Zone 02R and therefore subject to the rules and regulations of the scheme.*
- *Transport have no objections to this development as the proposed side extension will not change the existing parking arrangement or impact on other road users.*

Reading Borough Council, Access Officer - Response received on 16/06/2020, summarised as

- Limited scope to reduce the width of the extension on the basis of access requirements, which are presumed to require wheelchair access due to the wider doors stated and turning circle noted on the plan (Planning Officer note: the supporting letter from the agent doesn't explicitly reference wheelchair access, but it is evident that access requirements are at the forefront of the proposals).
- Wet room seems quite tight for space.
- Limited manoeuvrability in the bedroom as no wardrobe has been shown (unlike the wet room no turning circle has been provided).
- Unclear how the layout could be changed though. It is assumed that Part M of the Building Regulations have been taken into account. It is unlikely that the latest iteration of BS8300 would show anything different.
- From an access perspective there are no overriding concerns with the proposals.

A site notice was displayed from 11th May 2020, expiring on 1st June 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

EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN6 New Development in a Historic Context

EN15 Air Quality

SPG/SPD

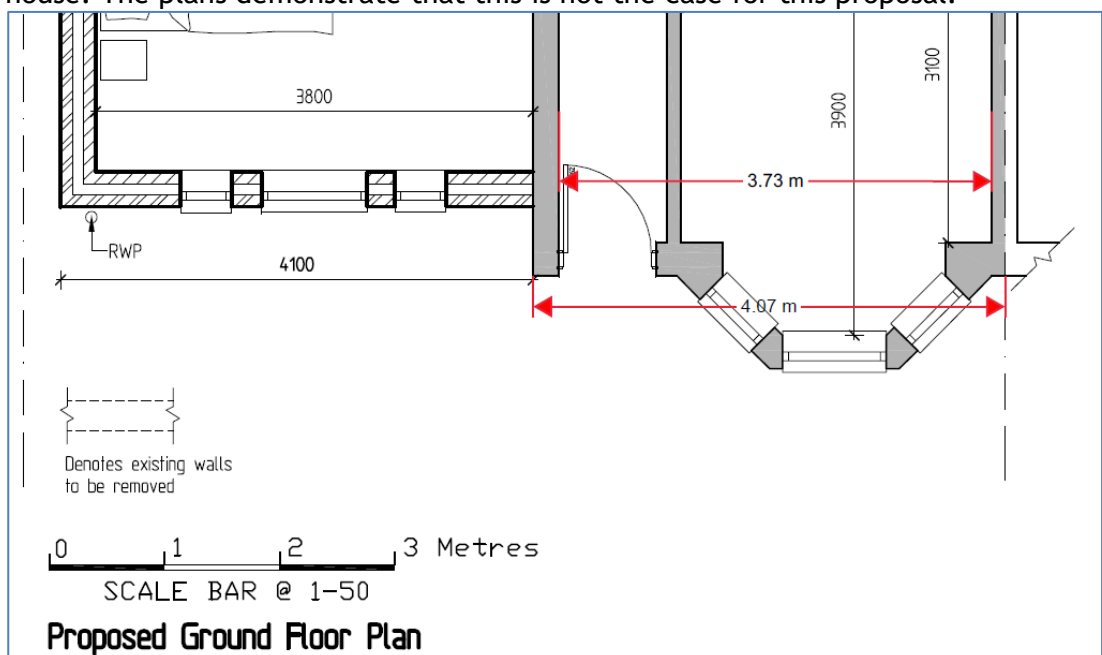
A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

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.*
 - The proposed single storey side extension is not considered subservient to the existing dwelling by virtue of the width of the proposal (4.1m). The width of the proposed side extension is greater than the width of the existing dwelling (4.07m) and is not considered acceptable. The House Extensions SPD specifies that side extensions should normally be designed to be smaller in scale than the main house. The plans demonstrate that this is not the case for this proposal.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan demonstrating the width of the proposal in relating to the existing dwelling.

- The proposed hipped roof to the side extension is also considered to contribute to the overall excessive size and bulk of the proposal in relation to the existing dwelling. This element of concern is a product of the excessive width referenced above, which facilitates a roof form which would be dominant in the context of the host building, terrace and wider street scene along Briants Avenue (for example when approaching the site from the north, with the side elevation of the existing host property being prominent in the streetscene owing to the existing gar and pedestrian path leading to Star Road
- *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.*
 - With regard the street scene along Briants Avenue, it is not considered that the single storey side extension would appear subservient to the existing dwelling. As a proposed boundary treatment has not been submitted within this application (despite requests by officers) it is can only be assumed that the proposed single storey side extension would sit prominently at the end of the terrace row at Briants Avenue with little or no screening, in a prominent location (as explained separately above).

- While the proposed side extension has been set back at further 380mm from the original proposal to 600mm from the front elevation of the existing dwelling, the considered harm of the proposed width and roof arrangement of the side extension outweigh the slight reduction in harm achieved by setting the proposal back to this extent.
- Whilst the proposed (amended during the course of the application) hipped roof is considered more acceptable than the originally proposed false hipped roof, as the roof now slopes away from the side elevation of the proposed side extension, the overall size and height of the roof is not considered acceptable. The loss of gable end in the revised roof reduced the size of the blank façade the side extension would have presented along the alleyway between 71 and 73 Briants Avenue, however, the increased bulk of the proposal at what is effectively first floor level is not considered to solve the issue of the overall overbearing nature of the proposal, which is not characterful in the locality (in particular in terraced properties - acknowledging that there is a lean-to extension on the side of No. 73 Briants Avenue, but this is far more modest in scale and relates to a semi-detached property).
- The proposed side extension roof extends to a maximum height of 4.5m to the existing side elevation of 71 Briants Avenue. It is emphasised again that the excessive height of the proposed roof is due to the unacceptable width of the proposed single storey side extension. A proposed side extension with an acceptable reduction in width would result in a more modest roof that would aid in the overall subservience of such proposal. As proposed, the roof arrangement is considered to contribute negatively to the overall bulk and size of the proposal.
- In terms of detailed design matters, in themselves the proposals are considered appropriate. The brickwork and slate roof tiles have been specified to match the existing dwelling. As such, in purely detailed design terms, there are no objections to the proposals.
- *Does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens.*
 - The proposal is not considered to represent an unacceptable loss of biodiversity within the garden, as the proposed usable outdoor space would still be larger than the proposed floor plan. However, it is noted that a significant proportion of the proposal is to take place on land that has not been previously developed. This area currently exists as a fenced off grass area.

Policy CC7 is the overarching design policy which Policy H9 stems into. It is also considered to be clear that the proposal does not comply with Policy CC7 either. In particular with regards to loss of character, it is not considered that the development responds positively to the local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness and providing value to the public realm.

It is considered that the proposed single storey side extension would have a visual impact on the setting of Grade II listed 82 Star Road. Policy EN1 requires development in areas of historic importance be protected and where possible enhanced. Policy EN6 also requires development contribute positively to the existing historic townscape in terms of built form. The proposal would have a negative impact on the views to 82 Star Road by reducing the openness of the alleyway. However, the impact the proposed side extension would have is not considered damaging to the point of constituting a reason for refusal for this application.



82 Star Road circles in red.

7.2 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:

- *Privacy and overlooking*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development*
- *Harm to outlook*
 - No proposed boundary treatment or landscaping has been presented within the application. As a result, it is not known if the existing fence surrounding the proposed side extension is to be retained, or if the panels that will be removed to accommodate the proposal will be replaced.



Existing Front Elevation of 71 Briants Avenue.



Existing Side Elevation of 71 Briants Avenue.

- The proposed single storey side extension is considered out of proportion with the existing dwelling in terms of width and height of the proposed roof. The proposal is considered to have a visually dominant impact to 71 Briants Avenue and is not considered subservient to the existing dwelling. As a result of the considered visual dominance the proposal would have on the existing dwelling at 71 Briants Avenue, the proposal is also considered to harm the outlook along Briants Avenue.
- The proposed side extension does extend the beyond the rear elevation of 71 Briants Avenue. While the proposed side extension would be visible from the

existing kitchen, it is not considered to harm the outlook from the kitchen to the point of refusal for this application.

- The proposal is not considered to harm the outlook from 69 Briants Avenue due to the situation of the proposal in relation to the nearest habitable room at 69 Briants Avenue. While the proposed side extension does extend beyond the rear elevation of 71 Briants Avenue, the proposal would be screened by the existing kitchen and bathroom to 71 Briants Avenue.
- The proposed single storey side extension is not considered to harm the outlook to 73 Briants Avenue, despite the built form of 71 Briants Avenue being closer to the side elevation of 73 Briants Avenue. The presence of the existing fence to 71 Briants Avenue and the width of the alleyway means that any considered material impact to 73 Briants Avenue is minimal.
- It is considered that the proposal would not harm the amenity to properties along Star Road due to the separation distance of the proposal to the rear elevations of these properties.
- The proposal is not considered to detrimentally impact neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light or privacy.

7.3 Access

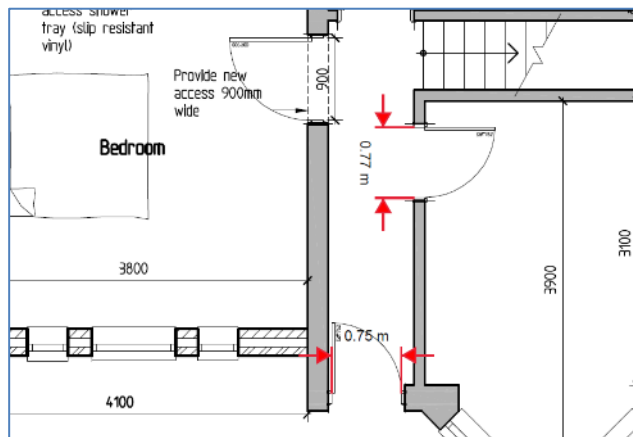
Policy CC7 requires all developments to be accessible, usable and easy to understand, including providing suitable access to, into and within, its facilities, for all potential users, including disabled people, so that they can use them safely and easily. A supporting letter was provided for this application regard, with the content of which reading as follows:

- *“The client is an 87 year old man who is having difficulty getting up and down the stairs and needs assistance for washing purposes. The proposal will provide a ground floor bedroom and wet room and doors have been widened as necessary for access purposes.”*

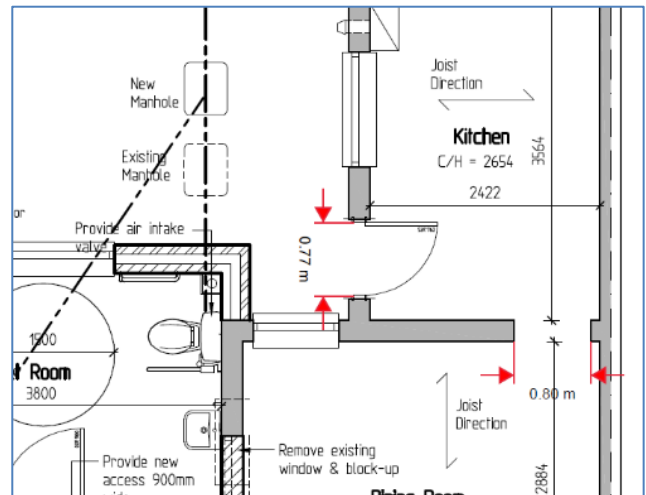
The proposed works would therefore improve the quality of accommodation for the current occupier of the property. This is fully acknowledged as a tangible planning benefit of the proposal. Based on this information, the plans were passed to the Reading Borough Council Access Officer for assessment. The comments provided regarding the proposals were based on the assumption that the applicant required wheelchair access, due the demonstration of a turning circle in the proposed wet room, and the demonstrated width of the proposed doorways. The requirement for wheelchair access has not been specified within the plans, neither has the need for the proposals to be compliant with DDA requirements.

Whilst the Access Officer has confirmed that the plans submitted are appropriate with wheelchair access for the applicant in mind, it is considered somewhat surprising that external (e.g. there is presently a step up into the dwelling from the front amenity space) or internal alterations to the existing dwelling have not been shown as being proposed (whilst acknowledging that internal alterations to an unlisted building do not in themselves require planning permission, one would have reasonably thought that to support the proposals as a whole the agent would have detailed that the proposal was part of wider adaptations to assist the applicant). For instance, the existing doorways to other parts of the house such as the kitchen have not been proposed to be widened in line with the specified requirements of the proposal. The width of the front doorway within the plans has been retained at 750mm, the width of the doorway to the kitchen has been retained at 800mm, and the width of the doorway from the kitchen to the rear garden has also been retained at 770mm.

Further detailed information, such as supporting letter from a medical professional, was requested to support the need for the proposals to meet access requirements. This information was not forthcoming. The information provided to support the proposal with regards to access needs has been somewhat limited and is not considered sufficient. In this instance it is considered that on balance the aforementioned planning issues relating the unacceptable size and bulk of the proposal outweigh the supporting evidence provided for the proposal.



Proposed doorway width to existing living room and front door to dwelling.



Proposed doorway width to existing kitchen and doorway to rear garden.

7.4 Flooding

As the proposal site is within flood zone3, it is required that a flood risk assessment report be carried out and produced to support this application. The report provided addresses the proposal by stating that the proposed side extension would be at the same level as the existing dwelling with a DPC set at 150mm above adjacent ground level. This is in line with Environment Agency advice that indicates that development should not be at a lower level than existing. A void of approximately 200mm has also been proposed to allow the flow of surface water.

It is considered that the proposals will not increase the risk of flooding or compromise the safety of the occupants or neighbours should a 1 in 100 flood occur. Had the proposals been supported, a compliance condition would have been included to ensure that the measures stated were carried out.

7.5 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.

7.6 Other matters

The land adjacent to 71 Briants Avenue, upon which the proposed side extension is to be constructed, does not appear to have historically been in residential use. This is based on historical maps and images in recent years. It appears a fence was erected around the plot between June 2017 and October 2018. Hence, it is not clear whether the proposal is lawfully within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse (and thus whether full planning permission was required, rather than a householder application submitted; irrespective of the certificate assigned on the application form). As a result, this matter is presently unclear and a change of use application may have been required in order to use the land for C3 residential use. This matter was raised with the applicant, who replied as follows:

With regards to the use of the land all of the property as indicated within the red line marked on the 1:500 and 1:1250 accorded to the BK Title Deed. Again if you really wanted information on this I could have quite easily have provided it for you.

This is not considered to be conclusive on this matter and had the agent chosen to extend the time period for determining the application, this matter would have been further discussed. Given the agent requested for the decision to be issued without delay, an informative will instead be stated on the decision notice in this regard.



Image captured in June 2017 (image from Google Maps).



Image captured in October 2018 (image from Google Maps).

Separate to the above, it is also noted that it is plausible that the proposed extension could be fairly simply altered to become a self-contained studio unit in the future (blocking up of an internal door connecting to the main house and adding an external door), as referenced by Policy H9. Had this application been supported by officers, a planning condition would be included to require the proposed single storey side extension to not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling known as 71 Briants Avenue.

7.7 Progress of Application

A series of communications were undertaken with the agent during the course of the application, summarised below:

Communication	Date	From	To	Details
Email	08/06/2020	Case Officer	Agent	Width of extension in relation to existing dwelling highlighted. Request to set proposal back, and submit a new roof design. Request for Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
Email	15/06/2020	Agent	Case Officer	Revised Plans submitted.
Email	16/06/2020	Case Officer	Agent	Request for further revised plans demonstrating the proposal in relation to the street scene, and existing & proposed boundary treatment. Request for Extension of time on decision to 26/06/2020
Email	17/06/2020	Agent	Case Officer	Agree to extension of time.
Email	19/06/2020	Agent	Case Officer	Revised Plans demonstrating proposed street scene received along with FRA.
Email	22/06/2020	Case Officer	Agent	Further request for plans demonstrating existing and proposed boundary treatment.
Email	23/06/2020	Agent	Case Officer	Revised Plans demonstrating existing front boundary treatment (no submission of existing and proposed side boundary or proposed front boundary treatment).
Email	24/06/2020	Case Officer	Agent	Overarching feedback on the proposals (as it was evident that all of the further plans requested would not be forthcoming).

Communication	Date	From	To	Details
				Reasons for refusal based on latest plans and supporting information provided. Procedural matter regarding use of adjacent land also raised. Agent presented with three options: 1. Receive refusal on 26/06/2020. 2. Withdraw application. 3. Grant further extension of time to 10/07/2020 to allow for amended plans to potentially address the current design concerns, along with providing additional supporting information.
Email	24/06/2020	Agent	Case Officer	Email containing letter requesting refusal decision notice.
Email	25/06/2020	Case Officer	Agent	Email confirming acknowledgement of option one to receive refusal decision notice.
Email	25/06/2020	Agent	Case Officer	Email requesting clarification on which plans will be determined. Highlights a perceived failure to look at other similar projects (no details provided by the agent).
Email	25/06/2020	Case Officer	Agent	Confirmation that the latest plans submitted are to be determined (Existing & Proposed Plans & Elevations - 01-C). Highlighted that the design issues outweigh the personal circumstances. Explained that no supporting information regarding similar developments have been submitted for consideration. Concluded that the proposal is not in compliant with local plan design principles.
Email	25/06/2020	Agent	Case Officer	Confirmation that latest plans should be determined within this application. Reiterates the perceived failure to look at recent approvals in the surrounding area.

8. CONCLUSION

It is evident that there are competing issues in this case. On the one hand, there are considered to be significant design concerns with the side extension proposed. On the other hand, the access requirements of the applicant have been specified in the submission, albeit only very limited detail has been provided by the applicant in this regard. Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations does not weigh in favour of granting planning permission on this occasion.

The information provided to support the design of the proposal with regards to access and the special circumstances of the applicant is considered insufficient when weighing the planning balance. In this instance it is considered that on balance the aforementioned significant design issues relating the unacceptable size and bulk of the proposal outweigh the limited supporting evidence provided for the proposal.

Officers did advise the agent of these shortcomings and this conclusion, setting out clear steps as to how such issues could be addressed (to potentially tip the balance in favour of an altered proposal) and providing the opportunity to further extend the time period for the determination of the application to allow this to potentially be explored by the agent. However, the agent did not appear to wish to follow this course of action and instead intimated that a decision should

be issued without delay. Hence the above conclusion reached on the application, on the basis of the information submitted and consideration of all material matters.

Permission is not granted due to the following reasons:

1. The proposed single storey side extension, by reason of its width and resultant scale and massing, fails to respect, maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider streetscene, contrary to Policies CC7 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:

- Re: 71 Briants Avenue, Caversham, Reading. - Letter dated 23rd April 2020

Received on 28/04/2020

- Floor Risk Assessment at 71 Briants Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AS

Received on 19/06/2020

- Existing & Proposed Plans & Elevations - 01-C

Received on 22/06/2020

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

The land adjacent to 71 Briants Avenue, upon which the proposed side extension is to be constructed, does not appear to have historically been in residential use. This is based on historical maps and images in recent years. It appears a fence was erected around the plot between June 2017 and October 2018. Hence, it is not clear whether the proposal is lawfully within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse (and thus whether full planning permission was actually required, rather than a householder application submitted; irrespective of the certificate assigned on the application form). As a result, this matter is presently unclear and a change of use application may have been required in order to use the land for C3 residential use.