

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: 126 Whitley Street

Application No: 192057/FUL

Applicant: Mr Cowen

Proposal: Proposed extension of existing dormer (retrospective)

Extended EOT: 17/04/20

Case Officer: Connie Davis

1.Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site is former 3 storey dwellinghouse which has been converted into 5 residential flats. The site lies on the western side of Whitley Street near the corner with Milman Road in a small terrace. Properties are of similar design with outriggers at ground and first floor level. Properties within the terrace have small flat roofed single window dormers (at the rear), as did the application site until it was removed.

The application site is not listed, nor in a conservation area. However the site is located within an Air Quality Management Area.

2. The Proposal

The proposal comprises of a flat roof rear dormer which measures a width of 3.5m, height of 1.5m and depth of 2.5m. It is set down from the ridge and away from the eaves by 0.5m

The application is the result of enforcement case. The development has been fully completed, although at the time the enforcement case was opened, the development was not complete. The proposed plans (and description of development) indicate that an existing small dormer is to be extended, although this is not the case. The existing dormer has been removed.

Although separate applications, it is worth noting that an identical application has been submitted at 124 Whitley Street (ref.192056) for the same proposal and has also been completed. The dormers at 124 and 126, although serve separate properties, run continuously across the roof of these properties.

The dormer has been constructed using tiles and brick.

Photographs of the development are provided in the appraisal section of the report.

3. Consultation

Internal Consultation

No internal consultees were consulted on this application.

External Consultation

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

124 & 128 Whitley Street
2 Milman Road

In addition a site notice was displayed between 27th January - 17th 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:

Drawing No.:

01 - Proposed Dormer

Received 6th January 2020.

5. Relevant Planning History

120599- Certificate of Lawfulness for existing use as 5 residential units - Application Permitted

6. Discussions with applicant/ agent

The agent was advised of the concerns relating to the proposal in terms of the design of the dormer and its appearance within the wider terrace. Particular concern was raised over the continuity of the dormer with that at 124 Whitley Street. The agent stated that the development had been completed when the Planning Enforcement team made their visit, and the proposal should be accepted due to it already being completed, the amount that work would be undertaken to make the changes, and because the site accommodates elderly residents.

It is not considered that these are suitable justifications for the proposal. The development was not complete at the time of the enforcement investigation (photos later in report) and the applicant decided to proceed at their own risk despite not acquiring planning permission. The fact the development has been completed is not considered a reason to necessarily accept poor design. Whilst the situation is unfortunate for the residents that may be living in the building, this again does not warrant the LPA accepting sub-standard design. The applicant was responsible for making sure correct permissions were in place before the development continued.

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

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

10. Appraisal

- 1) Principle of Development
- 2) Design
- 3) Impact on the Street Scene
- 4) Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- 5) Other Matters - Plans

1) Principle of Development

There is not considered a strong resistance to the principle of development. Other properties within the terrace have small rear dormers (as did the application site before it was removed). As such, an additional or replacement dormer is not considered to be an anomaly within the roofscape of the terrace. However the addition of a dormer would be subject to complying with design and amenity policies.

2) Design

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'*

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.

Examples of small dormers are found within the terrace (as seen in the image below). In comparison to the dormer at no 124, these are significantly smaller in overall scale. The proposed plans do not accurately represent the development as constructed. It indicates that the existing small dormer has been retained and the proposal seeks to extend this (as described in the description of development). In fact, the small dormer has been

removed, and so the overall width of the dormer is not as substantial as shown. The width of the dormer in place is 3.5m, however it does extend to the edge of the property to the boundary with 124 where their dormer begins. This gives the appearance of one continuous dormer across the roofs of these two properties.



Dormer extending across 124 and 126 Whitley Street



Photo taken at the time the enforcement case was opened showing the wider terrace. The development had not been completed at this stage.

In terms of materials, the application form states that tiles have been used, and it does appear that these match the tiles of the main property and wider terrace. However, a section of brick has been included on the boundary between nos 124 and 26 (possibly to try and distinguish the boundary line) but this is not included within the plans.

Nevertheless, this is considered a poor solution and as the detailing is considered a fairly prominent feature on the dormer (and adjoining dormer) and again represents a poor quality of design and finish which once again is out of keeping with the wider terrace.

Overall the dormer is not considered to suitably in keeping with the scale and positioning of dormers found on the wider terrace. This leads to an overall poor quality finish, coupled with the poor quality material finishes (high level bricking), which have not been depicted on the proposed plans. As such, the proposal is considered contrary to Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

3) Impact on the Street Scene

Whilst the dormer is not visible within Whitley Street, it is visible from Milman Road and this visibility from public realm adds to the harmful nature of the proposal as built contrary to Policy CC7.

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 will cause adverse impact to adjoining neighbours 124 and 128 Whitley Street. This is due to the positioning within the roof and not in conflict with any other dormers within the terrace.

The site also faces on to no. 2 Milman Road, although the sites are separated by a car park. The dormer will face on to high level windows at no. 2, however the separation distance between the properties is 30m 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.

4) Other Matters

Plans

As described in the appraisal above, there are a number of errors shown on the proposed plans. More specifically, they illustrate that the original dormer was to be retained and extended, but this has in fact been removed. This conflicts with the description of development. In addition, the plans do not illustrate the dormer's high level brick detailing on the boundary with no. 124 Whitley Street.

Conclusion

To conclude, the dormer is considered out of keeping with the scale and positioning of other dormers within the terrace. The dormer sits on the boundary with no. 124 instead of being sufficiently positioned within the roof slope. The material detailing is also considered of poor design quality and the submitted plans do not accurately represent the development as it has been built.

Recommendation

REFUSE planning permission for the following reasons:

1. The development, by way of its scale and positioning within the roof slope, is considered uncharacteristic of roofscape of the wider terrace. In addition, the materials used, particularly the high-level brick, is not considered to create a positive addition to the appearance of the surrounding area contrary to Policy CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).
2. Drawing 01 does not accurately depict the dormer as it has been built. It omits material details and illustrates the retention of the existing dormer which has been removed during the course of the development. As such, the description of development is inaccurate and from the plans provided, it does not allow for a full assessment of the proposal to be made in relation to Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Informatives

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

Drawing No.:

01 - Proposed Dormer

Received 6th January 2020.

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