

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: 200770/HOU

Address: 65 Russell Street, Reading, RG1 7XG

Proposals: Single storey rear extension and roof extension, PV panels, Terraced Patio and frontage railings.

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Applicant: Katherine Lewis

Date received (valid from): 8 June 2020 **Target Decision date:** 26 August 2020

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises a semi-detached single dwellinghouse on the east side of Russell Street, close to the junction with Epping Close (to the north). The application site building is not listed, but is located within the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area, placed on Historic England's 'Heritage at risk' listing in 2018.

This inter-war property is one of a pair of three sets of semi-detached dwellings at this part of Russell St, contrasting in age and style to the typical properties found along Russell Street as a whole. The site is also in an air quality management area. The surrounding area is almost exclusively residential in nature, within a variety of single dwellinghouses and flats (e.g Epping Close). The land slopes down to the north along Russell Street and to the east towards Epping Close. Many of the original features have been retained.

It was not possible to conduct a site visit due to exceptional circumstances however the agent provided photographic evidence of the site.

Google Earth August 2020 front



Google Earth August 2020 rear



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

A householder application for planning permission is sought for a single storey rear extension and roof extension, terraced patio and frontage railings.

The proposal consists of a refurbishment of the property, replacing windows and repair due to subsidence to the rear gabled two storey projection.

A loft conversion is proposed with a dormer window that is set down within the roof in proportion with the scale of the rest of the house and a velux window. A proposed single storey rear extension extends across the width of the original property 4m beyond the rear elevation adjacent to 67 Russell Street and 3m beyond the rear elevation adjacent to 63 Russell Street. Metal railings are proposed to be installed to the front boundary and the existing wall lowered, with the front brick wall built up to 1.6m for 1.1m with railings above to screen the bins. A window in the side elevation of the roof is also proposed to be widened. A terraced

Materials proposed are stated to integrate with the original features.

As the building is not listed, no consideration of internal alterations is given in this application. Various other internal alterations are also proposed, for which planning permission is not required.

Plans considered

20-1932/000 Location plan

20-1932 05jun2020 Design, planning and heritage statement Owens galliver architects
CIL form

As received on 8 June 2020

20-1932/099 Rev B Proposed block plan
As received 24 August 2020

20-1932/100 Rev A Plans and elevations as existing
20-1932/101 Rev B Plans and elevations as proposed
As received 1 September 2020

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None

4. CONSULTATIONS

Neighbour consultation

A total of three neighbour letters were sent as part of this application on 11/06/20. No responses have been received.

A site notice was erected on 12/06/20. A press notice was published on 22/06/20, expiring on 13/07/20.

Reading CAAC was formally consulted on 11/06/20. No response received.

Internal consultation

RBC Ecology - No objection.

Heritage Consultant - No objection to the revised design, subject to the approval of materials to match the existing house due to its location in the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area.

Discussions with agent

The agent was advised of concerns regarding the original proposed loft conversion in relation to the Conservation area. It was explained that although the case officer was not averse to the design, the location was not characterised by authorised rear dormers or changes to the rear pitched roof gables 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 the loss of slate roofs. 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. Following the submission of amended plans, the size and location of the dormer window was considered acceptable in this instance. Original materials are proposed to be retained with materials to match to be approved.

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.

5. 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:

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
National Planning Policy Guidance (2014 onwards)

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019
CC1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development)
CC2 (Sustainable design and construction)
CC3 (Adaption to climate change)
CC7 (Design and the public realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding amenity)
EN1 (Protection and enhancement of the historic environment)
EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)
EN4 (Locally important heritage assets)
EN6 (New development in a historic context)
H9 (House extensions and ancillary accommodation)
TR3 (Access, traffic and highway-related matters)
TR5 (Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging)

SPG/SPD
A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

Other relevant documentation / guidance / legislation
Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2020)
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking (Historic England, 2015a)
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2015b).

Appraisal

1) Principle of Development

- 2) Design considerations and impact on the character of the Conservation Area and streetscene
- 3) Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- 4) Other issues
- 5) Overview

1) Principle of Development

In principle, it is considered acceptable for there to be some form of development to the domestic dwelling at 65 Russell Street. The current proposal, as amended, is considered to be acceptable in this location. Although the introduction of dormers will be a new element the revised plans are considered to illustrate a style that can integrate well with the original building.

The principle of development is supported by the Council's Heritage Consultant. The slate roof and many original features will be retained to reduce the impact on the surrounding Conservation Area, which has been designated 'at risk'.

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

Design, Heritage Assets and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Surrounding Area.

The site lies within the Russell Street/ Castle Hill Conservation Area and as such there is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regards to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

Policy CC7 of the Local Plan requires that all development be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. In accordance with policy H9, extensions should 'respect the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and appearance of the street as a whole.

Policy EN1 requires all proposals to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance.

Policy EN3 notes that positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. The Council will, therefore, have regard to both the quality of the townscape and the quality and interest of the area, rather than solely that of the individual building. 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.*

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF 2019 details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF 2019 details that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

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 appraisal notes that the character of the area is predominantly residential, that has experienced the loss of historic features and detailing such as traditional doors and windows and roofing materials.

65 Russell Street is property is one of a pair of three sets of semi-detached dwellings at this part of Russell St. 65 Russell Street has retained many of its original features, although there have been unauthorised changes to windows in the vicinity.

The proposed railings to the front of the property will be higher than other railings in the local area but would in this instance be considered acceptable. The material specifications should be agreed with the Local Authority to preserve the appearance of the front wall onto the streetscene.

The proposed single storey rear extension is a more contemporary design with large windows and a flat roof. In this instance it is considered acceptable and is not considered to have a substantial detrimental impact on the original dwelling or the Conservation Area. Material specifications should be agreed with the Local Authority to ensure they are in keeping with the original property.

The proposed roof dormer would be visible from Epping Close however its design is not unduly prominent and is subservient to the host building.

The proposal to widen the window in the side roof elevation should be obscure glass with restricted opening to avoid any additional overlooking.

Replacement windows will be double glazed timber windows to match the existing house.

The NPPF acknowledges that planning decisions should not attempt to stifle innovation, originality or initiative; but it too seeks to reinforce local distinctiveness and to integrate new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposals are not considered to result in harm to the building or to the remainder of the pairs of semi detached houses.

However, the impact of the proposals would be relatively localised in comparison to the total size of the conservation area; as such the harm to the Conservation Area identified above would be less than substantial. In these circumstances paragraph 193 of the

National Planning Policy Framework says that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The public benefit in this case is more that, for future occupiers, it is considered that the proposed works would improve the quality of accommodation at the site. The benefits of the proposals are considered to outweigh the heritage shortfalls in changes to the original design.

Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development would preserve and enhance the appearance of this part of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area.

3) Impact on Neighbour Amenity

The neighbouring properties potentially affected by the proposals are No 63, 67 and 67a Russell Street due to the proposed loft conversion. It is not considered that the addition of the dormer would result in any significant increase in overlooking or result in a detrimental impact on amenity.

The proposed patio and stepped terrace to the rear of the single storey extension and the extension itself are not considered to have a detrimental impact on the neighbouring properties.

4) Other issues

Ecology has no objection to this proposal.

Sustainability

Building materials are proposed to improve the sustainability of the development.

5) Overview

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 proposed material specifications should be submitted to the local authority for approval to protect the character of the Conservation area.*
- 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 the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line; Respects neighbour's amenities and does not present 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
- invade the privacy of neighbouring properties through overlooking from windows or balconies; *NO the proposed rear dormer should not significantly invade the privacy of*

neighbouring properties. It is proposed that the side elevation widened window in the roof gable is obscure glazed.

- detract from the character of neighbouring properties through siting, excessive bulk, ill-matching materials or inconsistent design; *NO proposed material specifications should submitted to the local authority for approved to protect the character of the Conservation area.*
- detract from the appearance of the street or area by using ill-matched materials, glazing and detailing; *NO proposed material specifications should submitted to the local authority for approved to protect the character of the Conservation area.*

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity states an extension to a house will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

To assess this, the following has been considered - would the proposal cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking; NO
- Access to sunlight and daylight; NO
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; NO
- Noise and disturbance; NO
- Artificial lighting; NO
- Vibration; NO
- Dust and fumes; NO
- Smell; NO
- Crime and safety. NO

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed and the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

Application Approved