

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 15/08/19

Application No: 190988/HOU

Address: 1 Links Drive

Proposal: Two storey side extension

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.

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 3.85m. The proposal would project at this width to a depth of 7.8m along the original side elevation, which is staggered meaning the width of the property reduces to 2.5m flush to the original rear elevation. A distance of 3.5m 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 gable roof with a maximum height of 6.7m and a height to eaves of 4.8m. 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 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-01 - Location Plan
- PL-03 - Existing and Proposed Block Plan
- PL-04 - Existing Plans
- PL-05 - Existing Elevations
- PL-06 - Proposed Site Plan
- PL-07 - Proposed Plans
- PL-08 - Proposed Elevations
- PL-10 - 3D Images

Received: 20th June 2019

Relevant Planning History

181789/HOU - Two storey side extension - Refused
181802/HPA - Single storey rear extension - Withdrawn 05/11/18
181932/HOU - Single storey rear extension - Application Permitted
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 on 26/06/19:

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

Officer comment: See appraisal for discussion on impact of this neighbouring property

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent

The agent was advised in an email dated 07/08/19 of a number of concerns with the proposal which would lead to a recommendation to refuse planning permission. The concerns related to the impact of the extension on design grounds and the amenity of neighbouring dwellings.

The option of withdrawing the application to avoid a refusal was given however no response was received.

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

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

National Planning Policy Framework

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008)

Policy CS7 - Design and the Public Realm

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012)

Policy DM4 - Safeguarding Amenity

Policy DM9 - House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

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

Appraisal

Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area

Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy states that all development must be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area. Policy DM9 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document states that an extension to a house should respect the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design. The extension should also respect 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. The Council's Design Guide to House Extensions states that two storey side extensions should normally be designed to be smaller in scale than the main house, set down from the existing roof line and set back from the front elevation. The overall effect should be an extension in proportion with the original house.

The proposed extension represents a substantial enlargement to the original dwelling. Due to its unrelenting width, scale and bulk the proposal lacks subservience to the original dwelling. Although the extension would be suitably set down from the ridgeline by 2m, the width of the proposed extension would exceed half the width of the original dwelling therefore would appear as an over-scaled and discordant addition that would give the dwelling an unbalanced appearance. The set back of the proposal is minimal, a factor of an unduly bulky and awkward design. Viewed from Norcot Road, the resultant dwelling would be aesthetically poor in the street scene. In addition, where the proposal tapers to follow the splay of the boundary, the resultant roof form has a quite odd and contrived appearance, a clear indicator of overdevelopment. The proposed gable roof is also not in keeping with the hipped roof of the host dwelling. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy, Policy DM9 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Council's Design Guide to House Extensions.

Impact on neighbours

The orientation of 1 Links Drive and 224a Norcot Road, angled towards each other, is not conducive to the addition of a large side extension. Due to its height and bulk in close proximity to the boundary the proposal is considered excessive, appearing unneighbourly, visually dominant and presenting an overbearing effect to the residential amenities of 224a Norcot Road. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Council's Design Guide to House Extensions.

It should be noted that the issues raised as part of this application are almost identical to those raised under application 181789/HOU which was refused. A more substantial re-design was required in order to avoid this second refusal of planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

1. Due to its unrelenting width, scale and bulk the proposal lacks subservience to the original dwelling, constituting an over-scaled and discordant addition that would give the dwelling an unbalanced appearance. The taper is of an awkward and contrived design, appearing aesthetically poor in the street scene. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy, Policy DM9 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Council's Design Guide to House Extensions.
2. The extension by virtue of its height, bulk and proximity to the shared boundary causes a significant detrimental impact to the residential amenity of the neighbouring dwelling at 224a Norcot Road in terms of visual dominance and overbearing effects. The extension is therefore contrary to Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions.

Informatives

1. The refusal relates to the following plans and drawings as received by the local planning authority on 20th June 2019:

PL-01 - Location Plan
PL-03 - Existing and Proposed Block Plan
PL-04 - Existing Plans
PL-05 - Existing Elevations
PL-06 - Proposed Site Plan
PL-07 - Proposed Plans
PL-08 - Proposed Elevations
PL-10 - 3D Images

2. 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

3. The local planning authority has worked positively and proactively with the agent to advise them of the substantial concerns with the proposal. An email was sent to the agent on 07/08/19 offering the option of withdrawing the application but no response was received. Therefore the decision to refuse planning permission has been taken.