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DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

App Ref: 190007/HOU

Address: 3 Cawsam Gardens, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JE

Ward: Thames

Proposal: Two storey side extension

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Day

Case Officer: Connie Davis

Date received (valid from): 2 January 2018

Target Decision date: 27 February 2019

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a semi-detached two storey property located in a narrow cul-de-sac on the eastern side of Cawsam Gardens. The properties in the vicinity are similar in terms of design and architectural composition. The applicant previously owned both 2 and 3 Cawsam Gardens and due to a revision to the boundary between these two dwellings the application site has a greater separation distance to the eastern boundary and larger garden than neighbouring properties.

This application is a resubmission of application 180396 which was withdrawn by the applicant in light of a recommendation to refuse due to the harmful impact of the proposal's size, design and impact on neighbouring properties.

Proposal:

The proposal relates to a two storey side extension which will contain a covered parking area at ground level with an additional two bedrooms at first floor level. The proposed building line of the two storey extension would be marginally set back from the front of the existing property; the porch at the front of the property is a later addition and protrudes beyond the original building line of the property by around 1.8m.

The proposed two storey extension will be around 2.8m in width, 6m in depth and 5m eaves height with the maximum height to the ridge of 7.6m. The extension will be sited 2m from the boundary wall with 2 Cawsam Gardens at its widest point (front) and 1m at its narrowest point (rear).

No new windows are indicated on the side elevation plans at ground or first floor level. The window that is present on the ground floor side elevation of is one that already exists. Due to the proposed car port not having built side elevation, it means this window will still be visible.

The proposed materials would be to match the existing property. More specifically, the materials would consist of plain tiles, render and painted brickwork with white PVC windows.

The existing garage would remain in situ behind the proposed two storey extension.

Plans/ documents considered:

Drawing no:

P1802-01 Rev A - Location Plan & Block Plan

P1801-02 - Existing Plans And Elevations

P1801-03 Rev B - Proposed Plans And Elevations

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Supporting Letter (dated 27th November 2018)

Received 2nd January 2019.

Relevant Planning History:

180396 - Two storey side extension - Application Withdrawn
950387 - Two storey rear extension - Application Permitted
960696 - Single storey porch/WC - Application Permitted

Consultation Responses:

Internal Consultation

The Transport Development Control Advisor did not have any objections to this application as the proposed parking conforms to the Council's current standards and is therefore deemed acceptable. However a condition and informative would need to be included with any planning permission:

CONDITION:

DC1 Vehicle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans

The dwelling(s)/building(s) hereby permitted shall not be occupied until all vehicle parking space(s) have been provided in accordance with the approved plan. The space(s) shall be kept available for parking at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities to meet the needs of future occupiers and reduce the likelihood of roadside parking which could be a danger to other road users to accord with Policy CS24 & CS24 and Policy DM12.

INFORMATIVE:

IF3 Highways

- i) The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic.
- ii) Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should note that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council's website.

External Consultation

The following addresses were formally consulted by letter on 8th January 2019:

1 Cawsam Gardens, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JE
2 Cawsam Gardens, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JE
4 Cawsam Gardens, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JE
18 Cawsam Gardens, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JE
19 Cawsam Gardens, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JE
20 Cawsam Gardens, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5JE

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Letters of representation have been received from 2, 18, 19 and 20 Cawsam Gardens. Numbers 2, 18 and 19 raised objections to the proposal and number 20's representation was described as comments. The following issues were raised by the occupants of each address:

2 Cawsam Gardens:

- Concern that the proposal is being applied on land that has already had its boundary line moved for the construction of a large garage and driveway, resulting in a reduced access to their rear garden.
- Concern that they have already been encompassed by overdevelopment to the rear
- The proposal will result in overshadowing with a loss of light from 5 windows
- A loss of privacy due to the proximity of the covered car area
- Light pollution resulting from artificial lighting in the covered car area
- Noise pollution from associated use of the proposed development.

18 Cawsam Gardens

- Concern over parking provision and the potential increase in the number of cars parking at 3 Cawsam Gardens as a result of the proposed development
- Concern over legality of the building site area
- The overpowering effect of further building on a property that has already undergone extensive building to the rear
- Concern the development is for commercial benefit

19 Cawsam Gardens

- Concern over parking provision as the site is also used for commercial purposes
- The extension will not be in keeping with the rest of the properties in Cawsam Gardens which will block out light to number 2 and to some extent the houses opposite
- The house has also already been considerably extended at the rear

20 Cawsam Gardens

- Concern over parking provision and the increase in number of cars parked at the site

Other matters raised in representations

All material planning considerations are covered in this report, however concern has also been raised that the property is being used as a commercial office with a constant flow of traffic and for commercial gain. The proposal has been assessed as a householder application and as such, the transport consultation was satisfied with the proposed parking provision. Further evidence would be required to demonstrate whether the property is being used as a commercial business which should be reported to the planning enforcement team at Reading Borough Council.

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Any issues regarding access or shared services should be subject to a party wall agreement. An informative would need to be included regarding encroachment and conditions regarding construction with any planning permission.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

The agent was advised via email on 31/01/19 that the application would be refused due to the impact on no. 2 Cawsam Gardens and the cumulative impact of development as it would result in the overall sense of symmetry (in terms of scale) of the pair of semis being severely compromised. As a result, the proposal was not considered to be in keeping with the overall street scene of Cawsam Gardens.

The agent did not wish to withdraw the application.

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

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 Development Framework Core Strategy (2008)

CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012)

DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity)
DM9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
DM12 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

Appraisal

In the assessment of this the following has been considered.

The main issues are:

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- Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area
- Impact on neighbours

a) Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area

Policy DM9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012 altered 2015) states that an extension to a house should respect the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and respect the character and pattern of neighboring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line. Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the Core Strategy (2008) also states that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area.

The proposal is considered an overdevelopment of the site due to its width across the plot. It has been recognised that the overall scale of the proposed extension has been reduced since the previous submission however it is still not considered to respect the scale and proportions of the original property or neighboring properties. The proposed extension is only marginally set back by from the original front building line by approximately 0.4m and has a width of approximately 2.8m (at ground and first floor levels) which results in a gap of less than 1m from the boundary wall with 2 Cawsam Gardens at its narrowest point (and 2m at its widest). Due to the orientation of the site boundary, it means that the proposed extension's distance to the shared boundary decreases from the front to rear.

Caswam Gardens is characterized by pairs of semi-detached dwellings. For the most part, the pairs of semi-detached dwellings have noticeable and fairly sizeable gaps between them. These gaps between the pairs of semis are considered part of the character of the street scene and the gaps are also significant to avoid a 'terrace effect' which the Council's SPG 'A Design Guide to House Extensions' notes should be avoided: *'the existing gaps between properties are often a crucial factor in determining the appearance and character of a street. The loss of these gaps due to two storey side extensions can result in a terrace being formed visually and the loss of views between houses'*. Additionally, the proposed car port is a feature which is not found on other properties within Caswam Gardens and therefore this addition, due to its design, is out of keeping with the design of individual properties and other pairs of semis within Cawsam Gardens.

The proposed side extension is also considered to reduce the symmetry of the pair of semi-detached dwellings by virtue of its scale and design. As such, this is also considered to harm the prevailing character of the street scene whereby pairs of semis largely reflect the scale of one another when viewed from the street and gaps are maintained between pairs. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm), Policy DM9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions.

b) Impact on neighbouring properties

DM4: 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. This has been assessed and it is

considered the proposal would cause a detrimental impact to the living environment of any existing or new occupiers or neighbours.

The neighbour that is considered to have the potential to be impacted to the greatest extent by this proposal is 2 Cawsam Gardens. This neighbouring property has 5 side windows that would face on to this proposed extension, however only one of these windows is that of a habitable room (kitchen); the other windows are that of the porch, landing and bathroom which are not considered habitable and therefore cannot be the focus of this discussion.

The kitchen of 2 Caswsam Gardens has dual aspect windows and the applicant has illustrated that a 45 degree light angle is met in relation to 2 Cawsam Gardens for the rear kitchen window, along with the first floor bedroom window. However no impact was considered or assessed against the side kitchen window. Evidence should have been submitted in order to demonstrate to officers that the amount of light this side kitchen window would receive is on balance acceptable, or that it is shown that this side window is not the primary kitchen window. In order to demonstrate to the local planning authority that this proposal was suitable in relation to the side kitchen window, this should have been illustrated within the proposed plans and light angles indicated and described, along with any other supporting information such as a daylight impact assessment. This window cannot simply be disregarded by the planning authority without assessment and the onus was on the applicant to prove that the proposal would not result in a harmful loss of light for 2 Cawsam Gardens, or that the window is not the kitchen's primary window, which has failed to be demonstrated. This side window has not been illustrated or referenced in any form on the proposed plans.

Furthermore, the proposed two storey side extension is considered overbearing as the flank elevation of the extension would extend approximately 6m along the shared boundary at a distance of between 1m and 2m (approximate minimum and maximum distances respectively) at both ground and first floor level. The proposed extension's ground floor flank elevation has been designed so that a wall will not be facing no. 2; instead there is no physical flank elevation, so the two storey element will be supported by two pillars measuring approximately 0.5m in width and depth and 2.1m in height. However the overall structure of the two storey extension is considered, by virtue of its depth, height and proximity along the boundary from 2 Cawsam Gardens to be unneighbourly in terms of visual dominance and would result in an overbearing impact when assessed from the side kitchen window. This proposal is a somewhat improvement of the initial application, however it is considered that these are still greater than the site can accommodate when assessed in relation to 2 Cawsam Gardens.

It should also be noted that plans P1801-02 (Existing Plans And Elevations) and P1801-03 Rev B (Proposed Plans And Elevations) indicate that the site boundary for 3 Cawsam Gardens is adjacent to the north-eastern side of the boundary wall to 2 Caswsam Gardens. It should be noted that party walls are not a planning matter.

Conclusion

Due to the orientation of the plots of no. 2 and no. 3, a considerate and modest extension is required, smaller in scale than that proposed. As it stands the proposal is considered to be an overdevelopment of the site in terms of its size when assessed in relation to neighbouring properties and the prevailing street scene. The

design of the proposal, in part due to its overall size, and also the proposed car port which is not a feature of any property within Cawsam Gardens is also considered to not integrate well with the wider street. As such, the proposed development would be harmful to the overall street scene which is contrary to Policy DM9 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015), Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

In addition, the proposal is considered to cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of the neighbouring property at 2 Cawsam Gardens in terms of visual dominance and overbearing effects and the impact of the proposal in respect of the potential loss of light. As such, the proposed development would be harmful to neighbouring properties, specifically to 2 Cawsam Gardens, which is contrary to Policies DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

Pre-application advice was sought in advance of this further submission, however it is not considered that this re-submission has been able to overcome the initial issues identified. As such the proposed development is not considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and permission should be refused.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE planning permission

Informatives:

- 1) Positive and Proactive working