

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

APPLICATION NUMBER: 08/00373/FUL

ADDRESS: Land to rear of 1 Wokingham Road

THE PROPOSAL

Retrospective application for side dormers in roof of new dwelling to the rear of 1 Wokingham Road.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDING AREA

The site is a small 1 bedroom, 2 storey dwelling located to the rear of 1 Wokingham Road. The dwelling has recently been constructed on a grassed area adjoining the parking and manoeuvring space for 1 Wokingham Road and the St Helens Court residential development. Immediately to the north and west of the site lies Reading Cemetery. The remainder of the surrounding area is predominantly residential.

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

06/00033/FUL. Erection of a dwelling on land to the rear of 1 Wokingham Road. Allowed on appeal. 14.11.2006

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATIONS

The application was assessed at an Applications Steering Group meeting. The response at this meeting was that the design and bulk of the dormers are unacceptable.

The Building Control, Valuations and Transport Departments, and the Council's Natural Environment Officer, were consulted as part of this application. None of them had objections to the dormers.

RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

10 items of correspondence were received. The issues raised by the correspondents were as follows:

- The applicant has not confirmed the location of the parking bay for the dwelling.
- The applicant has not confirmed the location of the bin storage.
- The applicant must ensure the risers are left operational.

- The applicant has not bought attention to the skylights.
- The current first floor window to the rear of the property has been installed as a door, suggesting it may be used as a balcony.
- The building has been sympathetically designed.
- The windows do not affect other properties.
- The application for the dormer windows is supported.
- The dormer windows will provide surveillance of the church yard.
- The windows are not visible from Wokingham Road.

POLICIES

LDF Core Strategy Document policies:

- CS7 (Design and the Public Realm),
- CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment).

'Saved' Reading Borough Local Plan Policies:

- HSG8 (House Extensions),
- CUD14 (Standards of Design in Development),
- CUD10 (Historic Parks and Gardens).

SPG:

- A Design Guide to House Extensions

APPRAISAL

Dormers

The Planning permission for the subject dwelling was granted on appeal in 2006. The applicant asserts that inadequate space is available at first floor level to allow appropriate head room for the stairs, and insufficient room for a double bed. They therefore constructed two box dormers in the roof space to rectify this situation. The current application is for retrospective consent for these structures.

The dormers are two large, flat roofed structures that occupy a considerable area of the west facing roof slope. The exact dimensions cannot be ascertained as the submitted elevations do not appear to be accurate. For example, the space between the dormers appears to be greater on the elevations than in reality, and the plans do not show the white fascia boards above the glazing.

The dormers have a bulky, ungainly appearance which contrasts with the

modest size and scale of the host building. They are also considered to harm the setting of Reading Cemetery, which is Grade II Listed on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

With regard to the applicants assertion about the difficulties of providing head height for the stairs, and room for a double bed, cross sections were requested by officers to illustrate these difficulties. These were not submitted. It should also be noted that the internal layout of the building is not consistent with the approved plans. These indicated a staircase to the centre of the building with a single sleeping gallery. Instead, the staircase has been constructed next to the western wall of the dwelling, with the first floor subdivided into a bedroom and a small dressing room of approximately 3.8 square metres in area. It is therefore considered that the applicant has not adequately demonstrated that the dwelling is not habitable without the dormers.

A number of correspondents have stated that the dormers allow surveillance over the Cemetery, improving security and safety for users, whilst discouraging vandalism. Whilst this benefit is acknowledged, this is not considered to overcome the harm identified above.

Roof Light

A roof light, not indicated on the approved plans, has been installed in the eastern side of the roof slope. This faces the front of St Helens House at a distance of 14 metres. The facing elevation of St Helen's House contains windows serving bedrooms at ground floor level, living rooms at first floor and studies at second floor. The applicant has stated they would be willing to install obscure glazing in the roof light. Were the application to be approved, given the distance between the buildings obscure glazing is considered to adequately protect the occupants of the host building and St Helen's House from an undue loss of privacy.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse.

Case Officer: Ben Pratley