

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 24/09/2018

Application No: 181319/HOU

Address: 43 Cockney Hill, Reading

Proposal: Part two/part first floor rear extension, two front dormer windows and increase in size of existing dormer window

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application property is a detached chalet bungalow located on the north side of Cockney Hill, close to the junction with Pantile Close. The area is predominantly residential with a mix of detached bungalows and two storey dwellings of varying designs and sizes, many of which have been extended.

Proposal:

This is an application for extensions and alterations to the existing bungalow to essentially form a two storey dwelling (when viewed from the rear of the dwelling). Two dormer windows are proposed on the front elevation as well as an increase in size and design of existing dormer window. A part one/part two storey extension is proposed at the rear.

The materials would match those of the host dwelling.

Plans Considered:

Drawing No: Location and Block Plan 18/02/01 A

Drawing No: Existing Elevations 18/02/03 A

Drawing No: Existing Floor Plans 18/02/02 A

Drawing No: Proposed Ground Floor Plan 18/02/04 A

Drawing No: Proposed First Floor Plan 18/02/05 A

Received 30th July 2018

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations 18/02/06 B

Received 13th August 2018

Relevant Planning History:

None.

Consultation Responses:

Highways: No objection.

Neighbour letters were sent to No's 41 and 45 Cockney Hill and No.15 The Pantiles. One letter of support received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

The agent was advised by email 6th September of concerns relating to the scale/design of the proposals individually and cumulatively. The agent was advised of changes required to render the scheme more acceptable and asked to submit amended plans (and/or initial response) by 17th September. This has not been forthcoming hence the issuing of this decision.

No formal pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission of this 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

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

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2008 (amended 2015)

CS7: Design and the Public Realm

CS24: Car/Cycle Parking

Sites and Detailed Policies Document, Oct 2012 (amended 2015)

DM4: Safeguarding Amenity

DM9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

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

Supplementary Planning document - Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Appraisal

The main issues are considered to be:

- Design, impact on the host dwelling, character of the area and street scene
- Impact on neighbouring amenity
- Impact on parking/highways

Design, impact on the host dwelling, character of the area and street scene

Due to the nature of the proposals, the overall increase in the actual footprint of the dwelling would not be unduly excessive. Indeed, the proposals would essentially ‘square off’ the rear of the building. The proposals would be no closer to the side boundaries than the existing and there would remain sufficient amenity space at the rear of the site. As such, it is considered that this specific plot could accommodate such extensions without resulting in a cramped appearance or over development of the plot.

The proposals would clearly change the appearance of the dwelling within the street scene. However, its location is on a street which features a mix of bungalows and two storey dwellings, and, in terms of design, it is noted that the neighbouring property No.45 Cockney Hill was granted planning permission (160675) for two front dormer windows and a large two storey rear extension.

Notwithstanding the above, however, when considering the proposal on their own merits, they are considered unacceptable in design terms, as explained in greater detail below.

Looking at the front elevation, dormer windows should be positioned so that they respect the style and proportions of the windows below and positioned so that they reflect the symmetry of the existing building. Indeed, page 10 of the adopted SPD ‘Design Guide to House Extensions’ notes that “It is important that dormers... reflect the pattern of existing window openings by being positioned to line through vertically with the window openings below” and that dormer windows “should be set down within the roof slope and be in proportion with the scale of the rest of the house in terms of overall size and window shape”.

It is not considered that these criteria would be complied with. The dormer windows would not be set down from the main roof ridge and would not fully align with the windows below; indeed, they would be larger than the existing windows, resulting in a ‘top heavy’ appearance out of proportion with the existing dwelling. Further to this, given the number,

size and design of the dormer windows proposed, they would occupy a significant proportion of the roof slope, dominating the roof. Consequently, the dormer windows would result in a cluttered, incongruous and 'top heavy' appearance to the detriment of the host property and visual amenities of the street scene.

Similarly, at the rear, due to the size, massing and design, the proposed rear extension is considered to be an overly bulky and prominent addition to the dwelling - again with no set down from the main roof ridge to allow for a subservient addition. Combined with the dormers on the front elevation, the proposals are not considered to be satisfactorily subservient enough with the host property to be acceptable. Although it is acknowledged that the rear of the dwelling would not be so readily visible from a public vantage point, this is not considered to justify allowing a development which would have a poor appearance within the area.

Further to the above, the aforementioned scheme at No.45 Cockney Hill (160675) is noted. However, that development incorporated 2 dormer windows on the front elevation rather than 3 which allowed for a less cluttered roof slope and they were set down from the main roof ridge to appear subservient to the host dwelling. At the rear, albeit not set down from the main roof ridge, the appearance was softened by the hipped roof (rather than the proposed gable end) and due to its design the roof profile was less bulky.

Therefore, whilst policies and decisions should encourage sustainable development and not seek to impose prescriptive design, appropriate weight should be attributed to promoting or reinforcing local distinctiveness. In this case it is not considered that the concerns with regards to the incompatibility with the existing dwelling and street scene have been overcome by good design.

For the reasons stated above, it is considered that due to the design, scale/bulk and combination of the various elements proposed, the proposals would not represent subservient additions to the host dwelling and would result in a dwelling that would be an incongruous feature within the street scene. This would therefore be 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 2018.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

The neighbouring properties potentially affected by the proposals are No's 41 and 45 Cockney Hill, located to the west and east of the site respectively.

In relation to No.45 Cockney Hill, whilst the dormer windows on the front elevation would be visible, given their position within the roof and distance to the common boundary, they would not result in any material loss of light, privacy or overbearing impact to the occupiers of this property. Similarly, at the rear of the property the proposed extension would clearly be visible. However, it would be no closer to the common boundary than the existing dwelling, it would not breach a 45 degree line to the nearest habitable room window and the roof would be hipped away to minimise the impact. As such, it is not considered to result in any significant material loss of light or overbearing impact to the occupiers of this property. No windows are proposed on the first floor flank elevation and as such there would be no material loss of privacy.

Further to the above, it is also noted that this property was granted planning permission for similar extensions at the front and rear of the dwelling, which, if built, would further minimise any impact.

In relation to No.41 Cockney Hill, this property is set slightly further back in its plot than No.43. As above, whilst the proposed dormer windows on the front elevation would be visible, given their position within the roof and distance to No.41 itself, they are not considered to result in any significant material loss of light, privacy or overbearing impact to the occupiers of this property. At the rear, the proposed extension would clearly be visible to the occupiers of this property. However, No.41 projects quite significantly past the rear elevation of No.43 which in itself would minimise the impact. Given this, the distance to No.41 itself and that the roof would be hipped away to minimise the impact, it is not considered to result in any significant material loss of light or overbearing impact to the occupiers of this property. No windows are proposed on the first floor flank elevation and as such there would be no material loss of privacy.

Impact on parking/highways

There are no changes proposed to the existing access arrangements and the proposals would retain the existing parking provision on the driveway at the front of the property, which complies with the Council's Parking Standards. No transport objection.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE

The proposed development, due to its bulk, scale, massing and detailed design, would create an overly dominant and incongruous form of development which would not be subservient or sympathetic to the host dwelling. As such, the proposed development would be harmful to and out of keeping with the character of the surrounding area, contrary to Policy DM9 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015), Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015, the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions (2003) and the National Planning Policy Framework 2018.

Informatives

The decision relates to the following drawings and documents:

Drawing No: Location and Block Plan 18/02/01 A

Drawing No: Existing Elevations 18/02/03 A

Drawing No: Existing Floor Plans 18/02/02 A

Drawing No: Proposed Ground Floor Plan 18/02/04 A

Drawing No: Proposed First Floor Plan 18/02/05 A

Received 30th July 2018

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations 18/02/06 B

Received 13th August 2018

The local planning authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way by clearly setting out concerns relating to the proposal and providing an opportunity for the applicant to withdraw the application. However, no response was received, hence the issuing of this refusal notice within the statutory time period to determine the application by. Use of the Council's pre-application advice service can avoid the need to refuse planning permission. This scheme was not subject to pre-application planning advice.