

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 172098/HOU

Address: 72 Chazey Road, Caversham

Proposal: Two storey side extension

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Decision date: Originally 19/01/2018; Extension of time agreed with the applicant until 11/05/2018

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application relates to a two storey detached property located on the northern side of Chazey Road, on the corner with Hewett Avenue. The area is characterised by large detached residential properties, on both sides of the road, each with substantial, mature gardens. To the north east of the application site is open land and playing fields. There is a protected tree (91/003) at the front of the site.

Proposal:

Planning permission is sought for a two storey side extension and single storey rear extension to serve as a 'granny annexe'. The materials would match those of the main dwelling.

Plans Considered:

The agent submitted the following drawings:

Drawing No: Existing Plans A-1010 Rev A

Drawing No: Existing and Proposed Roof Plan A-1030 Rev A

Drawing No: Existing Elevations A-1105 Rev A

Drawing No: Existing Elevations A-1100 Rev A

Drawing No: Site Location Plan and Block Plan Rev A

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations A-1110 Rev A

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations A-1115 Rev A

Drawing No: Proposed Plans A-1025 Rev A

Received 24th November 2017

Relevant Planning History:

020432 Single storey extensions to include double garage and garden room, move of vehicular access from Hewett Avenue to Chazey Road, and erection of entrance gates. Permitted
900940 Removal of existing garage roof and erection of first floor over garage to provide additional bedrooms and bathroom. Permitted

Consultation Responses:

Highways: No objection subject to informatives.

Ecology: Further to the submission of bat survey, no objection.

Natural Environment: No objection subject to condition.

No letters of neighbour representation received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

The agent was advised that a bat survey was required prior to the determination of the application. This was provided and considered acceptable by the Council's Ecologist.

The agent was also advised of concerns regarding to the scale, bulk and design of the proposals, which were considered to result in a design which, due to its excessive scale, would fail to be subservient to the host property. The agent was also advised of concerns relating to the possibility of the extension forming an attached dwelling at a later period due to its size and inclusion of second staircase. It was relayed that conditions could be imposed preventing the extension from being occupied at any other time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling at No.72. Notwithstanding, in order for the proposals to comply with Policies DM9 and CS7, a redesign would be required to allow for a more subservient addition to the host property. The agent submitted revised floor plans removing the staircase element; however there was no change to the overall bulk and massing and the plans were not formally accepted as part of this application. Extensions of time were agreed on the application to submit revised plans, with a final extension of time agreed until 11th May. The agent emailed 11th May stating that they would be prepared to enter into a S106 legal agreement to prevent the subdivision of the extension from the main property. This had not been requested; moreover, it was considered this could be dealt with by way of a suitably worded condition subject to all other aspects of the proposal being acceptable. No external design changes had been made and the documents and plans were not accepted as part of the application. The agent confirmed that they wished to receive the decision notice with a view to appealing.

No 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

CS36: Biodiversity and Geology

CS38: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

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
- Impact on ecology
- Impact on trees

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

Policy DM9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) 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 neighbouring 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 also states that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions states that 'two storey side extensions should normally be designed to be smaller in scale than the main house'.

The existing dwelling is particularly wide, even in terms of the area, where there are a number of substantial properties. The property was originally wide and has increased in width by way of side extensions over the years. The proposed side extension would further increase the width of the dwelling and whilst it is considered that the plot size could accommodate such an extension, the current proposals are not considered sensitive enough to the host property.

Although the host property is wide, the design of the extension is excessively wide and large. This is evident in the length of the ridge as shown on the proposed roof plan. The proposals would produce a bulky and wide two storey extension (with no set down or set down or step back) resulting in a design that fails to be subservient to the host property.

Whilst it is noted that the extension has been designed to reflect the existing gable, in terms of footprint it would be noticeably wider, overwhelming the original property and becoming a dominant gable, whereas extensions should be sympathetic and subservient and read as an extension to the main dwelling rather than becoming the principle focus. The gable extension, matching the ridge height would represent a visually dominant addition and indeed, the proposed roof plan clearly illustrates how the scale of the new extension will dominate the host property - with the dwelling appearing more akin to a pair of semidetached properties.

Further to the above, the application has been submitted as a householder residential extension. However, the floor plans would suggest there is strong scope for the extension to form an attached dwelling a later period. Although the accommodation is generous and the layout lends itself to being separate from the host dwelling, conditions could be imposed

preventing the extension from being occupied at any other time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling 72 Chazey Road. Notwithstanding, in order for the proposals to comply with Policies DM9 and CS7, a redesign is required to allow for a more subservient addition to the host property.

It is noted that an application for a large two storey side/rear extension was refused at No.20 Chazey Road and subsequently dismissed at appeal. The Planning Inspector considered whilst the extension would incorporate a slight drop in height and set back from the main property, these measures would not be sufficient to prevent what would be a dominant and incongruous addition. In this instance, it is considered that a suitably designed extension may be acceptable in this position; however, with regards the above and the Inspectors appeal decisions, it is not considered that this has been achieved under the current proposals.

The agent has stated that the proposed extension would be used for an elderly couple who 'otherwise will be a burden to local authority'. Whilst the needs of the applicant are noted, the motives are not a material planning consideration.

Given the above, the proposed extension would be contrary to policies CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (2009) and Policy DM9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Reading Borough LDF Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) and the Council's supplementary planning guidance, "A Design Guide to House Extensions" (2003).

Impact on neighbouring amenity

The neighbouring properties potentially affected by the proposals are No. 26 Hewett Avenue and No.70 Chazey Road, located to the north and east of the site respectively. In relation to No.26 Hewett Avenue, whilst the proposed extension would be visible, given the significant distances involved it is not considered to result in any material loss of light or overbearing impact to the occupiers of this property. Two first floor windows would face towards the rearmost part of the garden of No.26; given the existence of first floor windows on this elevation, it is not considered there would be any significant material loss of privacy over and above the current situation.

In relation to No.70 Chazey Road, no windows are proposed on the flank elevation facing this property and as such there would be no material loss of privacy. Whilst the proposed extension would be large, and visible to the occupiers of No.70, it would not breach a 45

degree line to any habitable room window either at the front or rear of the property. It would be offset from the boundary and the roof to both the two storey and single storey elements would be hipped away to minimise the impact. No.70 has the benefit of single storey garage/shed structures immediately adjacent the boundary and given this, and the above, the proposals are not considered to result in any material loss of light or overbearing impact to the occupiers of this property.

Impact on parking/highways

The proposals would not change the existing parking provision and the garage is to remain unchanged; therefore, Transport do not have any objections to this proposal as there is no change to the existing arrangements and no impact on other road users.

Impact on Ecology

The application site comprises a large detached property where it is proposed to construct a two-storey side extension, involving the removal of a chimney stack. The bat survey report (Urban Tree Experts, January 2018) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the risk of the works adversely affecting roosting bats is minimal. As such, the works are unlikely to affect any protected species, and there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds. In any event, as bats are protected species, this is covered by separate European legislation.

Impact on Trees

There is a protected tree at the front of the site. The Tree Officer considers it to be far enough from the proposed extension to not be affected but should the application have been approved then a condition would have been attached requiring submission of a tree protection plan prior to commencement of works.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE

The proposal would produce a bulky and wide two storey extension (which would not be noticeably set down or back and include a long ridge). This would result in a design which due to its design, bulk and excessive width, fails to be subservient to the host property.

As such, the design is considered to be contrary to policies CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009) and Policy DM9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework, Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) and the Council's supplementary planning guidance, "A Design Guide to House Extensions" (2003).

The following plans were submitted as part of the application:

Drawing No: Site Location Plan and Block Plan Rev A

Drawing No: Existing Plans A-1010 Rev A

Drawing No: Existing and Proposed Roof Plan A-1030 Rev A

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The local planning authority has been positive and proactive in its dealings on this application by communicating its concerns with the application and suggesting that the application be withdrawn or revised plans submitted to overcome the concerns raised. This suggestion has not been accepted by the applicant. This planning application was submitted without first having sought pre-application advice, which can often avoid the need to refuse planning permission. The Council's pre-application advice service is here:

http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1190/Pre-Application-Enquiry-Form/pdf/Pre-app_1_Revised_Nov_2015.pdf