

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 170298

Address: 12a The Horse Close, Reading

Proposal: Erection of detached garage and associated works.

Case officer: Jasmine Singh

Determination date: Originally 20/04/17; extension of time until 21/7/17

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The site comprises a detached chalet bungalow (accommodation within the roofspace through front and rear dormers) located at end of The Horse Close. The corner plot is unusually shaped, almost triangular in shape minus the cul-de-sac vehicular turning point. The residential unit is set back from the front building line of other properties along this north-west side of The Horse Close, which enables space for a front driveway/garden. There is also significant amenity space to the north west (rear) and the east - south-east (side) of the property. Within this side amenity space are two purple plum trees, beyond which is hedging and significant trees beyond the red line of the application site. The properties in the area have similar characteristics in terms of their design and style and all contain integral garages. There are significant land level changes in the local vicinity of the site and surrounding area.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential, although beyond the northern boundary of the site is an access road leading to Harvey's Nurseries (Park home site) and beyond this is the playing field associated with the nearby The Hill Primary School.

Proposal:

The applicant proposes the erection of a detached garage building to the east of the main building, to the side of the existing front forecourt. The garage would be a maximum of 6.3m in length / width and 4.3m in height. The footprint of the garage would be 6m x 6m, with an internal floorspace of 5.75m x 5.75m. It would include a steeply pitched roof, with the height at eaves level being 2.3m.

A revised plan submitted during the course of the application included a door on the side elevation and detailed two forecourt parking spaces immediately outside the garage, with the existing dropped kerb extended to facilitate access to the garage.

Discussions have taken place with applicant (on the 7th July) and they were advised to withdraw the application to avoid refusal of the application. The applicant was advised to re-position the garage adjacent to the dwelling in accordance with existing pattern of development in the immediate neighbourhood. More information was required in relation to the removal of the trees / impact on remaining trees outside of the side. It was also recommended to address the variation in the ground level in future plans, while the proposed garage should also be shown in context with the existing dwelling, rather than in isolation as at present.

Plans Considered:

Location & Block Plan: 1250 rev 05
Proposed Single Detached Garage: 1250-3 rev C

Received on 4th July 2017

Planning History:

None.

Consultation Responses

Neighbouring properties: No representation received

Transport:

Original observations:

The proposal consists of the construction of a single detached garage and the extension of the existing dropped kerb.

The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.

Currently there is no garage associated with this property; however there appears to be an area of hard standing in front of the house, although no car parking has been illustrated on the plans.

In accordance with the Revised Parking Standards and Design Document it is recommended that the internal dimensions of a single garage are 7000mm long x 3000mm wide.

The proposal states that the existing access point will need to be widened to accommodate access to the new garage; however this has not been illustrated on the submitted plans.

The applicant should be advised that a license must be obtained from the Council's Highways section before any works are carried-out on any footway, carriageway, verge, or other land forming part of the public highway to agree the access construction details.

In order to fully determine this application the parking provision and the proposed widened access point will need to be illustrated on revised plans before this proposal can be fully determined.

Revised observations following submission of revised plans on 4th July:

The proposal consists of the construction of a single detached garage and the extension of the existing dropped kerb.

The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.

Revised plans have now been submitted and illustrate two parking spaces in front of the proposed detached garage. In addition to this provision there is parking available on the existing drive. Plans also illustrate a detached garage. As previously advised in accordance with the Revised Parking Standards and Design Document it is recommended that the internal dimensions of a single garage are 7000mm long x 3000mm wide. The dimensions of the new garage do not conform to the council's current standard however it is acknowledged that off road parking is available and therefore the proposed provision is deemed acceptable.

The proposed widening of the access point has been illustrated and is acceptable although to facilitate the new access the boundary wall/fence will require partial removal. The applicant should be advised that a license must be obtained from the Council's Highways section before any works are carried-out on any footway, carriageway, verge, or other land forming part of the public highway to agree the access construction details.

Transport does not have any objections to this proposal subject to the following conditions and informatives.

CONDITIONS:

DC1 Vehicle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans

The 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 and Policy DM12.

Access constructed before occupation (approved drawings)

The garage should not be brought into use until the access has been constructed in accordance with the approved drawing and in compliance with the requirements of the Local Planning Authority for work carried out within the public highway.

Reason: In the interests of road safety in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS20 and Sites and Detailed Policies document Policy DM12.

INFORMATIVES:

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.

Access construction

The Council's Highways section should be contacted at 19 Bennet Road, Reading, RG2 0QX, telephone: 0118 937 2138, to agree the access construction details and to grant a licence before any work is carried out within the highway. A formal application should be made allowing at least 4 week's notice to obtain details of underground services on the applicants' behalf.

Natural Environment (not formally consulted on the application, but comments provided on 10/07/17 after a telephone call to the Natural Environment team seeking clarification over the TPO status of the purple Prunus to be removed):

The application form states that there are no trees on or adjacent to the site within falling distance - this is not correct.

The applicant is intending to remove 1 or 2 purple Prunus trees in poor condition. Given the size of trees outside the red line of the application site, but nearby, it is anticipated that their RPAs would extend to the location of the proposed garage.

The applicant should submit revised plans in line with the original Transport comments and also to include trees (trunk positions, canopy spreads and Root protection Areas) accurately plotted. This applies to all trees within 15m of any part of the proposal.

If the garage is within RPAs, the foundation specification and method of construction should be submitted and it would be expected for this to be one of minimal dig construction, i.e. hand-digging only for pads.

Further clarity was provided once the revised plans received on 4th July were subsequently assessed. It is confirmed that the amended plans make no difference to the original comments made. Furthermore, it is considered reasonable to include a reason for refusal relating to a failure to demonstrate that there would be no harm to trees in the proposed development.

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'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Accordingly, the following are relevant:

National
National Planning Policy Framework 2012;
National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 - ;

Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008) (Altered 2015)
CS7 Design and the Public Realm
CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
CS24 Car / Cycle Parking
CS36 Biodiversity and Geology
CS38 Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

Sites and Detailed Policies Document - (Adopted October 2012) (Altered 2015)
DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
DM9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents
SPG - A Design Guide to House Extensions (2003)
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Planning Issues

The main planning considerations in the determination of this application are:

- Design / impact on the character of the host property, street scene and surrounding area
- The impact upon neighbouring/nearby properties
- Transport implications
- Tree implications

Design / impact on the character of the host property, street scene and surrounding area

Policy CS7 (Core Strategy) refers to the “high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.” Policy DM9 refers to the “extensions to the side and front of houses are particularly visible. In these cases, it is important to reflect the character of the street and ensure that an extension is not visually dominant in a way that detracts from its surroundings. Extensions should reflect the building line, or, preferably, be set back from the building line.” The House extensions SPD states (p12) that buildings in the garden which will look out of keeping in the area will be refused.

When assessing a proposal such as this, consideration must be given to whether the massing, scale, design and external materials are sympathetic to the scale and character of the host building and the immediate neighbourhood. Adopted policies state that permission will normally be granted to alter or extend if the massing, scale, design and external materials are sympathetic to the scale and character of the host building and its immediate neighbourhood.

The street scene is characterised by uniformity in terms of similarities in the design and overall visual appearance of the dwellings, with there being no instances of entirely separate ancillary buildings / garages detached from the main house - instead this part of the close is characterised by integral garages (some of which have been converted to habitable accommodation). Moreover, the application site benefits from a spacious open space to the front / side of the plot (owing to its end of close location) and hence has an undeveloped feel when approaching from the west (with the setting of trees and vegetation instead being dominant). There are no other buildings in the open frontages of the houses in this part of the close. In this case the proposed garage, owing to its siting, would appear at odds with the character of the street in terms of its style, and particularly its siting and its prominence in views from the public domain. More specifically, the isolated location in relation to the main house and the steeply pitched roof form would be of particular concern. The resultant mass creates a development which in itself, when considered in the context of the prevailing character, appears to dominate and is unsympathetic in appearance, which would have harmful impact on the street scene / green character at this point. The siting and design of the proposed garage are therefore considered to detract from the character of the street scene and the host dwelling, and therefore the proposal is unacceptable in these terms, contrary to Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy, DM9 of the Sites and Detailed Policies document and the House Extensions SPD.

Residential Amenity

The garage is not considered to have a significant detrimental impact on the amenity of adjoining properties, given the existing context. As such, the proposal is considered to comply with policy DM4.

Although specified on the plans as a garage, the size of the structure is such that it could fairly simply be later altered to form a separate standalone single dwellinghouse with its own separate access and amenity space. As such, had the application been able to be supported, it would have been subject to a condition specifying that the garage would only being used ancillary to the main dwelling. Policy DM9 states that ancillary accommodation will be acceptable where it would

not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately. As such, a condition would have ensured that occurred.

Transport

As per the transport observations above, there are no concerns significant enough to warrant refusal of the application on transport grounds. Had the application been able to be supported it would have been subject to conditions / informatives as stated above.

Trees

As per the Natural Environment officer comments above, the applicant has not demonstrated that the proposals would not have an adverse impact on trees within and close to the site. In the absence of such information, this forms a second reason for refusal of the application.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE

Reasons:

1. The proposed building, by reason of its scale and siting, would result in an incongruous development unsympathetic to the character of the host building and wider street scene, contrary to Policy CS7 of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015), Policy DM9 of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015) and the Council's Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document.
2. The proposed development has failed to demonstrate, through the absence of information submitted, that trees within and close to the boundary of the site would be protected from damage or removal, contrary to Policy CS38 of the Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015).

Informatives:

1. This decision related to the following drawings received 4th July:

Location & Block Plan: 1250 rev 05
Proposed Single Detached Garage: 1250-3 rev C

2. The Council provides a preapplication advice service, which can provide guidance and advice on the likelihood of development proposals being granted planning permission, before the submission of a formal application. This can provide applicants with the opportunity to make amendments

before the submission of an application, and prevent the submission of applications for proposals that are unacceptable. More information on the service is available on the Council's website: http://beta.reading.gov.uk/media/1190/Pre-Application-Enquiry-Form/pdf/Pre-app_1_Revised_Sep_2015.pdf

3. In any future submission you are strongly advised to clearly demonstrate the existing / proposed ground levels at and adjacent to the proposals and show any garage in the context with the existing dwelling / streetscene, rather than in isolation as per this application submission. Furthermore, in relation to reason for refusal 2, it is noted that the application form states that there are no trees on or adjacent to the site within falling distance - this is not correct. The proposal would involve the removal of 1 or 2 purple Prunus trees. Furthermore, given the size of trees outside the red line of the application site, but nearby, it is anticipated that their root protection areas would extend to the location of the proposed garage. A plan to include trees (trunk positions, canopy spreads and Root Protection Areas - RPAs) accurately plotted would apply to all trees within 15m of any part of the proposal. Subsequently, if the garage is within RPAs, the foundation specification and method of construction should be submitted.