

Application No: 170802/HOU

Address: 140 Kidmore End Road,

Proposal: Extensions and alterations to existing bungalow to form a two storey dwelling (resubmission of planning application 161803).

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application property is a detached bungalow located on the north east side of Kidmore Road. The properties in the vicinity vary in terms of design and architectural composition and the property is flanked by a bungalow to the north west and two storey dwelling to the south east. There is a change in site levels, with No.138 Kidmore Road sited higher than the application site. The plot levels of the site vary up to 4m from front to back, resulting in a steep tiered rear garden.

Proposal:

This is an application for extensions and alterations to the existing bungalow to form a two storey dwelling. The proposals would include a new mid height rear access to the first garden tier. The proposal predominantly follows the building line of the existing bungalow, although some additions are proposed over and above the existing footprint to the front and rear. A wood burning stove chimney is also proposed on the side elevation with No. 142.

The materials would comprise off-white render, elements of Cedar cladding (predominantly at first floor level), roof tiles and aluminium doors and windows.

Plans Considered:

The agent submitted the following drawings:

Drawing No: Location Plan 305-104 Rev B

Drawing No: Block Plan 305-103 Rev B

Drawing No: Existing Plans and Elevations 286-101 Rev A

Drawing No: Existing Site Plan 305-102 Rev A

Drawing No: Existing Street Scene 305-109 Rev B

Drawing No: Landscape Plan 305-107 Rev B

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations 305-106 Rev C

Drawing No: Proposed Floor Plans 305-105 Rev C

Drawing No: Proposed Street Scene 305-108 Rev B

Received 19nd May 2017

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Preliminary Bat Survey

Received 19nd May 2017

Ecological Survey Report

Received 15th June 2017

Relevant Planning History:

161803 Extensions and alterations to existing bungalow including adding an additional floor.

Withdrawn 3/11/2016

Consultation Responses:

Ecologist: Originally sought for a Bat Survey to be undertaken. Once received, raised no objection subject to a condition requiring bat licence to be obtained from the Statutory Conservation Organisation and a copy submitted to the Council prior to commencement of works.

Highways: No objection subject to informative.

Natural Environment: No objection subject to condition.

5 neighbouring occupiers notified by letter. No letters of neighbour representation received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

Application 161803 was withdrawn due to concerns regarding the design and impact on the street scene, impact on neighbouring amenity and the need for a bat survey. Pre-application advice was subsequently sought under 162020 wherein it was not considered that the revised plans had paid sufficient heed to the concerns previously raised.

Under the current application, the agent was advised that a bat survey was required before the determination of this application. Once this was received 15 June, the Ecologist raised no objection, subject to a condition. However, the agent was advised that there were still concerns with the proposal, which were not considered to take into sufficient account the

advice given at the pre-application advice stage, with the proposals still appearing overbearing to the neighbouring property No.142 and the design resulting in an unacceptable impact on the character of the street scene. The agent was given the opportunity to withdraw the application; however, confirmed by email 13th July that he wished to receive the decision notice.

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 Woodland

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 natural environment

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. However, due to the design of the proposals it would (in practice) be more akin to a replacement dwelling than extensions and alterations to the existing bungalow. Whilst the proposals would clearly change the appearance of the dwelling within the street scene, given its location on a street which features a mix of bungalows and two storey dwellings, indeed the neighbouring property No.138 is a two storey dwelling, the proposal to convert to a two storey house is considered to be acceptable in principle subject to an appropriate design.

Since application 161803 was withdrawn, and further to the pre-application advice given, it is recognised that the extensions have been designed as such in an attempt to minimise the impact on No.142 Kidmore End Road. However, in terms of design, concerns were previously raised about the bulk of the two storey front gable and the transition between the flank properties and it is not considered that the proposals have had sufficient regard to the concerns raised or the advice given. Moreover, when considering the proposals on their own merits, irrespective of the previous application / advice, the proposals are considered unacceptable in design terms, as explained in greater detail below.

First, it is considered that the variety of eaves heights, building lines and arrangements of the several elements proposed would not be cohesive and would have an awkward visual relationship with each other. Specifically, the proposed front gable extensions would not integrate well with the main roof. It is considered that both would appear to compete for dominance, with each emphasising the bulk, and accentuating the built form, rather than appearing as subservient additions and aiding in a smooth transition between neighbouring properties. At the rear, the extensions are considered to result in a disjointed and contrived appearance, failing to compliment or relate well to the rest of the property. 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.

In additions, the applicant's requirements for living space are noted. However, it is considered that the proposal does little to achieve an appearance in keeping with its plot and its wider setting. It is considered that the elevations, as a result of poor design, would result in a building being extended by much more than its 'natural' or logical limits. The roof profiles lack cohesion and as such the scheme would result in a change from a simple roof profile to an especially complicated roof profile. Furthermore, the form/nature of window sizes (e.g. overly large windows at first floor level serving the main bedroom, comparatively small in height windows to serve the first floor bedroom closest to the boundary with No. 138 - and these being abutting the eave level of the roof - and, large expanses of full height glazing at ground level) is inconsistent and out of character with the prevailing street scene. Consequently, due to the design, overall bulk, massing and scale the proposals would be unduly excessive and would result in a disharmonious architectural composition and not a coherent whole.

It is noted that the scheme generally follows the footprint of the existing bungalow. It is considered that the footprint of the existing building does not translate well when adapted into a two storey dwelling. This is in terms of the character / appearance of the host building itself and the wider streetscene, with the existing footprint (in relation to the prevailing footprint of the majority of dwellings in the vicinity) therefore representing a significant constraint in any proposal of this type and nature. It is also recognised that the footprint of the existing building at the application site, together with the footprint of the neighbouring No. 142, are not typical of the predominant footprint of buildings in the area. Given the approach chosen by the applicant, to largely follow the footprint of the existing plot, this makes achieving a suitable design for a two storey dwelling significantly more challenging at the site. In short, it is not considered that the applicant has achieved a suitable approach in this instance.

The NPPF seeks a presumption in favour of sustainable development with emphasis on the need to secure high quality design and a good standard of design, as well as taking account of the character of different areas. Paragraph 60 notes that "Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles. It is, however, proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness."

Paragraph 65 states that “Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design.”

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 street scene have been overcome by good design.

Unfortunately, it appears that as a consequence of comments relating to neighbouring amenity, and due to the desire to build up on the existing floor plans, there has been less consideration as to the appearance of the proposals in elevation form. It is noted that various properties in the area have been extended to some degree, some significantly so. However, for the reasons stated above, it is considered that due to the design, scale and combination of the various elements proposed, this 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 2012.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

The neighbouring properties potentially most affected by the proposals are No's 138 and 142 Kidmore End Road, located to the south east and north west of the site respectively.

In relation to No.138 Kidmore End Road, this property is set slightly further back in its plot and due to the change in site levels, is situated higher than the application site. Two first floor windows are proposed on the flank elevation of the gable extension furthest away from No.138, but facing towards the front of the property. Given the orientation of the dwellings within their plots any views would be at an oblique angle and given there would be a distance of approximately 8m, it is not considered that there would be any significant material loss of privacy to the occupiers of this property. The resultant dwelling would not project past the rear of No.138, which itself is a two storey dwelling. Whilst the proposals would be clearly be visible from the front of the site, they would not breach a 45 degree line to the nearest habitable room window. Given the distance to the common boundary combined with the

orientation of the dwellings in their plots and change in site levels, the proposals are not considered to result in any significant material loss of light or overbearing impact.

In relation to No.142 Kidmore End Road, concern was raised under withdrawn application 161803 (and again under the pre-application submission) that the proposals would in a material loss of light and overbearing impact to the occupiers of this property. It is recognised that the proposals have subsequently been revised to try and minimise the impact on No.142 and the flat roof element proposed towards the rear of the property is noted. However, No.140 is at a higher level than No.142 and due to the two storey height of the majority of the extension adjacent the common boundary, with approximately 5m projecting past the rear of No.142 in such close proximity, it is considered to result in a visually overbearing impact to the detriment of the occupiers of this property. It is recognised that the existing property breaches a 45 degree line to the nearest habitable room window of No.142. However, the two storey height proposed, in such close proximity and in combination with the orientation of the dwellings in their plots, is considered to significantly worsen and exacerbate the existing relationship to an unacceptable degree.

Due to the positioning of windows and proposed use of opaque glass, it is not considered there would be any material loss of privacy to the occupiers of No.142.

The proposals are therefore contrary to Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

It is also noted that no sections / site long elevation plans through the site have been provided (which would also show the existing/proposed boundary treatments), which would have been helpful to officers given the differences in land levels at the site / the neighbouring sites (the plans should also specify the land levels). More explicitly, this would have assisted in the assessment of the amenity impact on nearby occupiers, although based on the information provided an assessment has been able to be made (as outlined above). This is with the exception of possible overlooking from the 'new decking' shown on the landscape plan. Furthermore, this would also have clarified the somewhat unusual appearance of the rear elevation depicting doors being set significantly above the ground level (presumably linking to the aforementioned decking). As such, it is recommended that an informative is added to the decision notice specifying that in any future submission these plans should also be submitted for consideration.

Impact on parking/highways

As per the previous application for this development plans submitted indicate that the garage is to be retained although it appears to be slightly smaller than the original as the rear of the garage is to be used for storage, however in addition to this there is ample space at the front of the property to facilitate off road parking provision for a minimum of 2 vehicles.

Transport do not have any objections to the proposals as they do not have any impact on the existing parking arrangements or impact on other road users, subject to informative.

Impact on ecology

The Ecological Survey Report showed there to be two bat roosts within the building. The Council's Ecologist is satisfied that mitigation could be provided to ensure that there would be no adverse impact upon the favourable conservation of bats (a protected species and therefore a material consideration) and raised no objection subject to a condition stating that a licence should be obtained from Natural England and a copy submitted to the lpa prior to commencement of works.

Impact on natural environment

Landscaping has been shown indicatively on Landscape Plan 305-107 B and the Council's Tree Officer has no objection to the proposals subject to the details being secured by way of condition, and to also include a tree on the frontage.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE

The proposed development, owing to its bulk, scale, massing and detailed design, **would create an overly dominant and incongruous form of development which would appear poorly integrated within the Kidmore End Road street scene. 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) and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.**

The proposed development, owing to its scale and proximity to No.142 Kidmore End Road, would be visually dominating and overbearing, causing a significant detrimental impact to the

living environment of nearby occupiers, contrary to **Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015)**.

Informatives

The decision relates to the following drawings and documents:

Drawing No: Location Plan 305-104 Rev B

Drawing No: Block Plan 305-103 Rev B

Drawing No: Existing Plans and Elevations 286-101 Rev A

Drawing No: Existing Site Plan 305-102 Rev A

Drawing No: Existing Street Scene 305-109 Rev B

Drawing No: Landscape Plan 305-107 Rev B

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations 305-106 Rev C

Drawing No: Proposed Floor Plans 305-105 Rev C

Drawing No: Proposed Street Scene 305-108 Rev B

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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, the applicant chose not to withdraw the application, hence the issuing of this refusal notice within the statutory time period to determine the application by.

It is noted that no sections / site long elevation plans through the site have been provided (which would also show the existing/proposed boundary treatments), which would have been helpful to officers given the differences in land levels at the site / the neighbouring sites (the plans should also specify the land levels). In any future submission it is recommended that these plans should also be submitted for consideration.