

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application No. 171076/FUL

Address: 230 Gosbrook Road, Caversham

Proposal: Two storey side extension, part single storey rear and first floor rear extensions

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The site relates to an end of terrace property located on the north side of Gosbrook Road, on the corner with Washington Road. The property is A1 use at ground floor level (although currently vacant) with a flat above. The site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 and an air quality management area.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for a two storey side extension, part single storey rear extension and first floor rear extension. The proposals would increase the size of the shop at ground floor and provide additional bedrooms to the flat above. The materials would match those of the host property.

Plans Considered

Drawing No: Location Plan

Drawing No: Existing Drawings 1733/PL/02

Drawing No: Existing Drawings 1733/PL/01

Received 2nd July 2017

Drawing No: Proposed Drawings 1733/PL/06

Drawing No: Proposed Drawings 1733/PL/05

Received 25th September 2017

Drawing No: Proposed Drawings 1733/PL/04

Received 26th September 2017

Relevant Planning History

170642 Proposed two storey side extension and part first floor rear extensions & conversion of the house into self-contained flats. Withdrawn

Consultation Responses:

RBC Transport: Revised plans required to address visibility splays and cycle/bin storage.

Seven letters of objection received concerned with:

- Parking
- Size/Out of keeping/character
- Building line
- Loss of light

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent

The agent was advised that the proposals as originally submitted were considered to result in an unacceptable impact on the character of the host property and street scene due to their scale, location, bulk and massing. Revised plans were received reducing the width of the two storey side extension. It is not considered, however, that the design revisions sufficiently address the concerns raised. The agent was advised of highways concerns in relation to parking provision and visibility splays; revised plans were received which were acceptable in some aspects and not in others. The agent was given the opportunity to withdraw the application but opted to receive the decision.

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

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, Sites and Detailed Policies Document and Reading Central Area Action Plan) 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 National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (2008) (altered 2015)

- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS20 Implementation of Reading Transport Strategy
- CS26 Network and Hierarchy of Centres
- CS24 Car/Cycle Parking
- CS34 Pollution
- CS35 Flooding

Reading Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD 2012) (altered 2015)

- DM4 Amenity
- DM12 Access Traffic and Highway Related Matters
- DM19 Air Quality

Reading Central Area Action Plan 2009

- RC6: Definition of the Centre

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

Appraisal

Principle

Policy RC6 requires that retail development will only take place within the Primary Shopping Area. The NPPF (para 23) recognises town centres as the heart of their communities and advocates policies to support their viability and vitality. It is the Government's intention, as set out in national planning policy and national planning

practice guidance, that town centre uses such as retail should be sited in town centres; and if not in town centres, then in local centres. A sequential test should be applied for main town centre uses that are not proposed to be in an existing centre; and applicants and LPS's should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale (para 24).

As such, a retail sequential test reflective of the nature and scale of the proposal is required with this application which has not been provided. In this specific instance, no justification has been submitted to show how the additional retail floorspace outside a local retail centre would not undermine the role or function of the town centre and therefore not harm the vitality and viability of the nearest centres affected. This is therefore contrary to paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

Design, Impact on Host Property and Character of Street Scene

The proposals would result in a large increase in the footprint of the property, which, whilst not forward of the Gosbrook Road building line, would bring the property significantly forward of the Washington Road building line. It is considered that the significant increase in footprint and height so close to the boundary would result in an overbearing feature on the adjacent pavement, dominating in views from the front and rear and resulting in an unacceptably prominent structure in such a prominent corner plot location.

The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions (2003) states that two storey side extensions should normally be designed to be smaller in scale than the main house as a rule of thumb a width of no more than half the width of the existing house. It is recognised that this is an extension to a shop with flat above, but the principle of achieving a subservient addition is relevant in the context of this end of terrace property. In this instance, the side extension would be more than half the width of the host property, and, whilst set below the main ridge of No.230 itself, would be higher than the remainder of the terrace, resulting in an overly dominant feature to this terraced row, and not a subservient addition - indeed, the proposals would appear to distort the scale of the terrace. In this respect, the proposal do not reflect the scale and proportions of the host property and terrace, unbalancing the terrace and the overall visual effect would appear contrived and unconvincing, as the proposals would appear as if they had been 'tagged on' to the end of the terraced row. Similarly, given the door on the front elevation and the overall scale proposed, the extensions could be perceived as a separate dwelling; another indication that the proposals are not subservient enough in appearance.

Given the above, the proposals would result in an unduly prominent development harmful to and out of keeping with the visual amenities of the host property, terraced row and character of the area. It is therefore considered that the proposals are contrary to Policy CS7 (Design and Public Realm) of the Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015).

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Concern has been raised that the proposals would result in a loss of light and outlook to No.232 Gosbrook Road, the adjoining property to the east of the site. Whilst visible, there would be a distance of approximately 1m from the first floor rear extension to the common boundary with No.232. The extension would not breach a 45 degree line to the nearest habitable room window as shown on the proposed plans. Given this, and its position to the west, it is not considered to result in such significant material loss of light or overbearing impact to warrant a refusal. No windows are proposed on the flank elevation facing this property and as such there would be no material loss of privacy.

The proposals would include first and second floor windows on the rear elevation where currently there are none. Given the distance of at least 20m to the rear of the site and common boundary with No.2 Washington Road, this is considered sufficient enough distance so as not to result in any significant material loss of privacy or overlooking and is not an uncommon relationship.

(Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

Amenity for Future Occupiers

All habitable rooms would be served by suitable levels of daylight, sunlight, ventilation and outlook. The proposed room sizes, whilst irregular in shape, are considered to be adequate. It is noted that the whilst the rooms to the second floor roof space would have a limited roof height (1.5m) as this would serve a shower room and stairwell this is not considered to be unacceptable.

Garden space would remain for the occupiers of the flat which is acceptable.

Transport

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking

distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. Typically this zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone.

With reference to the revised plans:

The lamp post has now been illustrated on revised plans, no access can be provided within 1 metre of the lamp column plans indicate that the distance between the lamp column and access is over 2m, this is therefore acceptable.

It would appear that the gates initially proposed have been removed, as has the illustration of a vehicle at the front of the property fronting Gosbrook Road. These are all acceptable changes.

Bins and Cycles can be housed in the same area, however they should be kept separate from one another, this is to encourage and promote cycling. Revised plans are required showing this separation.

Access has now been illustrated as being 4.8m wide, however the visibility splays have been incorrectly illustrated. The visibility splays either side of the access need to be to the near side kerb edge. Therefore a revised plan needs to be resubmitted with the changes. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m will be required to be illustrated on revised plans.

The agent was advised of the above but requested to receive the decision notice on the basis of the revised plans submitted. As such, insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed.

(Contrary to Policy CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy 2008, 2015 and Policy DM 12 of the Site and Detailed Policies Document 2012, 2015).

Impact on Flood Risk

The site is located in flood zones 2 and 3 as designated by the Environment Agency and a flood risk assessment has been submitted as part of the application. However, due to the sites location within Flood Zone 3, more information is required in relation to flood risk, with no mitigation proposed against the large increase in impermeable surfacing.

Developments within Flood Zone 3 should also consider the impact of the proposals in terms of flood risk beyond the application site, such as details of flood water storage and suds. The assessment should adequately demonstrate that the proposal would not result in an increased risk of flooding in accordance with Policy CS35 and the NPPF, and in this instance, it does not.

(Policy CS35 of the Core Strategy 2008, 2015).

All material considerations covered in the above report. The Council's Tree Officer has raised no concern with the proposals although should the application have otherwise been considered acceptable, would have recommended attaching a landscaping condition.

RECOMMENDATION:

REFUSE

The proposal, due to its bulk/mass, siting and detailed design would not relate sympathetically with its surroundings, appearing overly dominant in relation to the host property and terraced row, failing to provide a subservient addition. The proposal, in such a prominent location, would appear poorly integrated within the Gosbrook Road and Washington Road streetscenes, resulting in an overbearing, visually intrusive form of development out of context with the character of the terrace and wider locality and harmful to and out of keeping with the visual amenities of the streetscene. For these reasons, the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015) and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

No justification has been submitted to show how the additional retail floorspace outside a local retail centre would not harm the vitality and viability of the nearest centres affected. This is therefore contrary to paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

The Flood Risk Assessment fails to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in the increased risk of flooding to the proposed development itself or dwellings beyond the site boundary and contains no measures to mitigate such risk, contrary to Policy CS35 of the Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015) and guidance within the National Planning Policy Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.

Insufficient information has been submitted with the planning application to enable the highways, traffic and transportation implications of the proposed development to be fully assessed. From the information submitted, it is considered that the additional traffic likely to be generated by the proposal would adversely affect the safety and flow of users of the existing road network within Reading, contrary to Policies T2 and T4 of the South East Plan, Policies CS4, CS20 and CS22 of the Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015) and Policy DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015).

Informatives

The decision relates to the following drawings and documents:

Drawing No: Location Plan

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The local planning authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive way by 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.

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