

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: 240254/HOU

Address: 12 Wychcotes, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DA

Proposals: Part two part single storey rear extension. Loft conversion with rear dormer, increase in height of turret to front for accessible stairs, along with additional windows to front elevation. Re-roofing and replacement cladding.

Case Officer: Mr Gary Miles

Applicant: John Charles

Date received (valid from): 5 March 2024 **Target Decision date:** 5 July 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a large 2 storey detached dwellinghouse, constructed circa 1980's, located within the Cul-de-sac of Wychcotes in Caversham. The cul-de-sac is home to 7 large detached properties of similar design age and scale, along with a number of smaller semi-detached properties constructed circa 1960's. Wychcotes is surrounded by trees and vegetation including great specimens of mature cedars. A mature cedar tree covered by a TPO is present in the front garden of the host property. Many properties within Wychcotes have been subject to refurbishments and/or extensions. Permission was granted for a 2 storey side extension at no.9 Wychcotes in 1993 and permission was granted for side and rear extensions at no.10 Wychcotes in 2017. The property is not listed, nor is it within a conservation area. The property retains its Permitted Development Rights for Householders.

Site visit date: 14th March 2024

Site visit photos:



Front elevation



Rear elevation



Rear elevation

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal consists of a two storey, angled rear extension to extend the kitchen and create a study and extend the first floor bedroom over the study. Alterations of ground floor to enclose existing light-well into the hall. Loft conversion with rear dormer and additional windows to front elevation. Increase the height of the existing turret on the front elevation to allow access to the proposed loft conversion. The proposal includes re-roofing of pitched roof and the replacement of existing cladding to allow improvement to insulation of walls and roof. Various windows and doors to be replaced along with additional internal alterations.

Plans & documents considered:

Application Form-dated 27th Feb 2024
Location Plan-dated Dec 2023
Planning-Existing Plan-Ref 1A - superseded
Planning-Existing Elevations-Ref 2A - superseded
Planning-Proposed Plans-Ref 1B - superseded
Planning-Proposed Elevations-Ref 2B - superseded
Tree Protection Plan-dated Dec 2023
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 27th February 2024

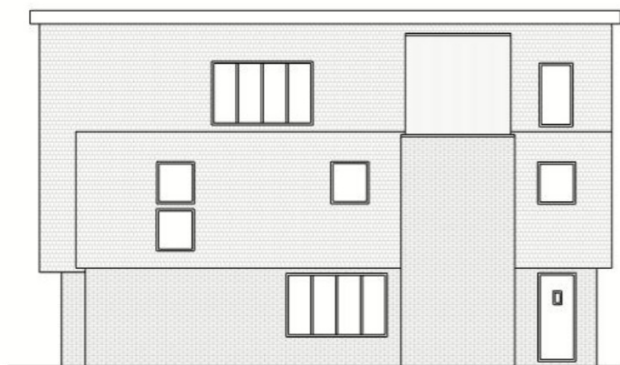
Preliminary Roost Bat Assessment (arbtech)-dated 15th Apr 2024
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 16th April 2024

Planning-Existing Plans-Ref 1A v.13/05/24
Planning-Proposed Plans-Ref 1B v.13/05/24
Planning-Existing Elevations-Ref 2A v.13/05/24 - superseded
Planning-Proposed Elevations-Ref 2B v.13/05/24 - superseded
Planning-Existing Elevations Finishes-Ref 3A v.13/05/24 - superseded
Planning-Proposed Elevations Finishes-Ref 3B v.13/05/24 - superseded
Planning-Site Plan-Ref 4A v.13/05/24
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 15th May 2024

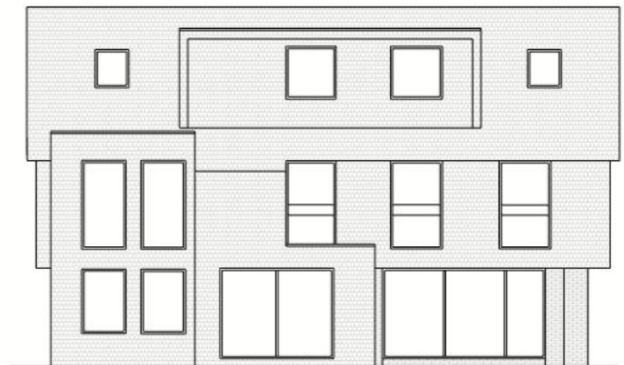
Bat Emergence and Re-Entry Surveys (arbtech)-dated 3rd June 2024
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 18th June 2024

Planning-Existing Elevations Finishes-Ref 3A v.02/07/24
Planning-Proposed Elevations Finishes-Ref 3B v.02/07/24
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 2nd July 2024

Proposed Elevations



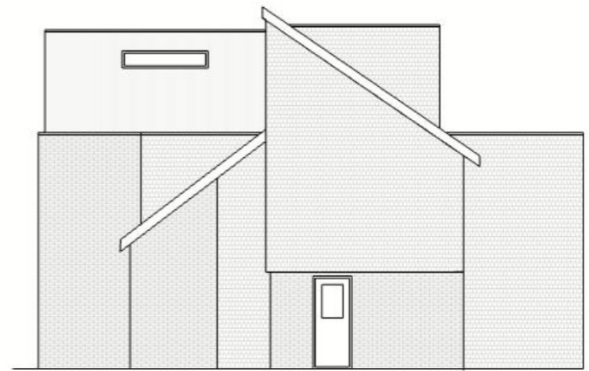
PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION



PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION



PROPOSED SOUTH WEST ELEVATION



PROPOSED NORTH EAST ELEVATION



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

231341 - T1 late mature Atlantic Blue Cedar - overall crown reduction to restructure & balance the crown (following branch failure) by selective branch reduction of up to 3m, leaving a crown shape appropriate to the species; crown lift western side to provide greater clearance above the neighbouring property - Permitted Oct 2023

110887 - Cedar - crown lift to provide 5m clearance above ground level; Remove one hazardous branch; Prune to provide 3m clearance from house - Permitted Aug 2014

970680 - Proposed side and rear two storey extensions - Permitted Jan 1998

960676 - Rear / side extension (2 storey) to existing building - Refused Dec 1996

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

21A St Peters Avenue, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7DD

21B St. Peters Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DD

1 Kelmscott Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DG

2 Kelmscott Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DG

23 St Peters Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DD

11 Wychcotes, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7DA

1 letter of representation received from neighbours at 23 St Peters Avenue:

We write in response to your letter dated 5th March 2024, advising us of the planning application that has been submitted for 12 Wychcotes.

We are happy with the ground and first floor plans but strongly object to the proposed addition of the large box dormer as part of the loft conversion. The dormer windows will have a direct

view into part of our dining room, living room, patio and garden. This will result in a serious invasion of our privacy and is exacerbated by the use of floor to ceiling windows in the dormer. We are also concerned that the two rear rooflights on the loft conversion, unless they are set high enough, will also overlook our garden. We note that these windows are missing from the 3D rear elevation drawing.

Our privacy is very important to us and the secluded garden was one of the main reasons we chose our house. These proposed windows will have a dominating impact on us and our right to the enjoyment of our property.

Rather than improving the appearance of the property from the rear, we think the design of the dormer is obtrusive and seems contrary to the original design of the Wychcotes properties, all of which feature a mono pitched roof with no dormer windows. The use of black tiles and cladding rather than softening the appearance will, we believe, have the opposite effect and make the dormer even more dominating.

1 letter of representation received from neighbours at 21A St Peters Avenue:

Thank you for your letter dated 5th March 2024.

We are writing to object to the planning application number 240254.

We object to the proposed development on the following grounds:

Scale / Dominance

The combination of the turret conversion and dormer loft conversion will create a significantly overpowering presence. The dormer is stepped in from the sides and will be approximately in line with the turret but still only about 5 metres from our boundary fence. The effect of this is a continuous structure (turret + dormer) spanning almost the entire width of the building. This would be dominating for us because of the way our property is positioned. It would appear to us as an entire extra floor. There would be almost double the amount of building mass visible over our fence line. This would have an impact on almost all of our living spaces (living room, kitchen, all first-floor bedrooms, garden, patio area). The proposed developments to the ground and first floors would contribute to the overall effect of dominating but to a lesser extent.

Loss of Privacy and Overlooking

We made the decision to purchase our property from our then-landlord because of the consideration the architects had given to ensuring privacy from neighbouring houses in the development. However, the proposed turret window would overlook all of our southwest-facing rooms (the living room, kitchen, and all bedrooms) and our garden. The proposed dormer windows would overlook two of our bedrooms, our kitchen and the northwest end of our garden. We would feel very much overlooked and this would have a negative impact on our enjoyment of the property.

Architectural Consistency

Our property, 12 Wychcotes and three others were all designed by the same architect and built at the same time. The principal common design feature is the single-pitched roof. 12 Wychcotes is the only one of the five to have a turret. The proposed developments to the 2nd floor of 12 Wychcotes (turret extension and dormer loft conversion) would serve to exaggerate the unique feature (the turret) and diminish the common feature (single-pitched roof).

We also have these comments:

- We are fine with the proposed developments to the ground floor and 1st floor
- We would be more supportive of a side extension on the southwest of 12 Wychcotes to accommodate an extra bedroom rather than the turret/dormer solution

- We would prefer the use of black-coated terracotta cladding (consistent with that used on neighbouring houses) rather than the proposed black slate

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPG

6. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance

Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design and respects 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 CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

Officers have reviewed the plans in detail and conclude the proposed dormer is of a subservient scale to the existing property and existing roof space, it is set down from the ridge of the existing roof space, and set in from the existing side walls. *It should be noted that the property does retain its permitted development rights and a dormer of this scale along with new sky-lights is achievable under Permitted Development.*

Officers consider the increased height of the turret to the front elevation will marry in with the existing character of the existing front roof elevation, will be clad in black cladding which will merge into the proposed vertical slate cladding on the upper roof front elevation. The increased height of the turret is not considered overbearing, officers consider the turret will match the

existing property shape, and the proposed materials will marry together seamlessly, enhancing the existing angles and ridges of the host property.

The proposed new window opening on the front upper elevation is considered acceptable in terms of design and character.

The part 1 part 2 storey rear elevation is considered acceptable in terms of design. It marries in well with the existing property and respects and enhances the existing angled features in terms of character and the proposed floor to ceiling windows will marry in with those on the existing property.

The proposed development will see new timber doors and windows to match the existing, adjoining brickwork will match existing brickwork, horizontal timber cladding and vertical black slate cladding, aluminium framed doors and black vertical board cladding. Officers consider the material finishes are acceptable and they will blend in with the host property and adjacent properties who have used similar materials.

The proposal is considered compliant with policies H9 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. Policy H10 seeks to ensure that the amenity of gardens and other outdoor areas are not compromised. Policy CC8 states an extension to a house will be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

The applicant was advised to amend the floor to ceiling windows in the loft dormer (these were revised to 800mm cill height) to protect against privacy and to make it feel less likely to be overlooked from a person standing in the dormer looking out. Whilst privacy cannot be completely maintained the smaller windows will be less overbearing and reduce the actual feeling of being overlooked. *It should be noted that the property does retain its permitted development rights and a dormer of this scale along with new sky-lights is achievable under Permitted Development.*

The proposed part 1 part 2 storey rear elevation is considered acceptable in terms of residential amenity - by the nature of the proposed rear elevation being angled to face west and look away from the neighbouring properties along the north-easterly and north westerly boundaries. The angled 2 storey rear element mitigates against overlooking and respects privacy, the proposed rear extensions creates a barrier of its own, further protecting sightlines or the feeling of being overlooked.

The window of the proposed clerestory (inside the turret) has been raised 1800mm above first floor landing level, the window will be non-openable and will be obscure glazed to reduce the loss of privacy to neighbours along the north-easterly boundary, but also reduce the feeling of being overlooked from a side facing window. The proposed windows on the south westerly turret elevation above the stair-well are not considered harmful as they face in a southerly direction, looking away from rear gardens are personal amenity space.

The proposal would not harm neighbouring amenity in terms of privacy, outlook, daylight or overbearing effects and is considered compliant with policies H9 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Trees

The property is home to a large Cedar tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order located in the front garden of the property and as such the Natural Environment officer was consulted. The applicant submitted the necessary Tree Protection Fencing plans which will protect the tree and the root protection area. The tree protection fencing will be erected in accordance with BS5837. The Natural Environment officer has no objections to the proposal and therefore the proposal is compliant with policies CC7 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Ecology

As the proposal contains work to the existing roof space, a Pre Roosting Bat Assessment were requested by the Ecology Officer. The survey concluded that the application site has potential to host roosting bats and so the Ecology officer required an additional Bat Emergence and Re-Entry survey to be carried out. The applicant arranged and submitted the results of the Full Bat Survey (arbtech) which was reviewed by the Ecology officer.

The Ecology officer confirms the bat survey report (arbtech) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard and concludes that the building is unlikely to host roosting bats. As such there are no objections to the application on Ecological grounds and as such the proposal is compliant with policies H9 and EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

Recommended Conditions:

TL1
AP1
M3
PD2
PD3
PD5