

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: 230624/HOU

Address: 21 St Barnabas Road, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8RA

Proposals: Erection of 2m wall with gate piers to site entrance and erection of 1.8m boundary fencing with tree planting

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Date received (valid from): 9 May 2023

Extended Target Decision date: 1 October 2023

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

21 St Barnabas Road is a detached two-storey dwelling located on a triangular shaped site at the intersection of St Barnabas Road and Surley Row. The area is residential and characterised by relatively generous plots, set back from the road. Both Surley Row and St Barnabas Road of the plot. The land rises up to a higher level towards the corner inside the plot between St Barnabas Road and Surley Row. There has been wooden fencing historically around the site along St Barnabas Road with a hedge and vegetation along Surley Row.

The building has been enlarged and extended with its access reoriented from 126 Surley Row to 21 St Barnabas Road. It is not a listed building or located within a Conservation area.

Site visit date: 05/07/2023

Site visit photos:



Streetview map Google 2009 Site View from St Barnabas Road



Streetview map Google 2021 View from Surley Row



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for a replacement boundary treatment. Plans proposed a 1.8m high wooden fence with 2m entrance wall and gate piers on St Barnabas Road with trees to be planted inside the fence to provide screening. There has historically been a wooden fence along St Barnabas Road. The changes propose a wooden fence along the remaining boundary with Surley Row and changes to create feature entrance wall piers. Material details have been provided for the gate piers. No entrance gate is proposed.

Red Robin pleached trees and are proposed to be planted, from 2m to 2.5m in height where the hedge is proposed to be removed. Additional vegetation is proposed to fill in any gaps in the trees.

Plans considered

21027 PP-12141309 Application letter, J Butterworth Planning, 9th May 2023

CIL

Location Plan

Naming and numbering plan, 21 St Barnabas Road

~~DRG 100 Proposed site plan and elevations (Superseded)~~

As received 09/05/2023

~~DRG100A Rev B Proposed site plan and elevations 07/08/2023 (Superseded)~~

Photos

As received 07/08/2023

DRG100A Rev C Proposed site plan and elevations 03/10/2023
As received 03/10/2023

Email from agent on 11 October 2023 at 18:40 to confirm the entrance wall piers to be Licata White Silicone Render to match the house <https://italianbuildingcentre.com/products/silicone-top-coat-render-25kg>
As received 11/10/2023

DRG100E Proposed Site Plan and Elevations, with trees added
As received 16 November 2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

211189/HOU 126 Surley Row, Additional storey plus proposed rear and side two storey extensions Permitted 5 October 2021

210717 126 Surley Row, Additional storey to increase the height of the building by 2.3 metres. Prior Approval under Schedule 2, Part 1, Class AA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) Prior approval not required 01/07/2021

210709 126 Surley Row, Certificate of Lawful Development for proposed rear and side extensions Permitted 30/06/2021

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter and a site notice as displayed at the site for the required period.

19 St Barnabus Road, Emmer Green, Reading

No letters of representation have been received.

RBC Transport - No objections subject to the entry gates being setback by 5m from the entrance and for the gates to open inwards. A highways licence may be required for the extension of a drop kerb.

RBC Natural Environment

Addition planting is required if any hedging is to be removed. It is noted that pleached trees are proposed which would give screening but limited canopy spread and acceptability depends on species (should be native or wildlife friendly). An alternative is stilted trees of an appropriate species, that would allow a little canopy spread. New fencing is proposed in likely roots of RBC vegetation outside the site - brief method of installation required. Normally this is just: hand dig of post holes, any roots cleanly cut, post holes lined with impermeable membrane prior to pouring concrete.

A pre-commencement condition is recommended to require additional information relating to the proposed trees to be planted and a maintenance programme.

Communications with the agent

Plans were amended and the proposed height of the fence reduced to 1.8m around the property due to concerns of the visual impact and dominance of the fencing. The agent provided amended plans to show additional planting where it is proposed that the hedging will be removed. The description of development was updated. A pre commencement condition for tree planting details and a maintenance plan has been agreed with the agent.

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 and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY- RELATED MATTERS

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Design Guide to House extensions (2021)

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.

APPRAISAL

Character of the area

Policy CC7 states that 'All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.'

The Design Guide to House Extensions states that 'the council will usually resist proposals that would close off views or change the character of a street unless a positive improvement can be demonstrated.' And that the character and appearance of the surrounding area and public safety in terms of sight lines should be considered.

The character of the area is predominantly green and verdant. Most houses have hedging along boundaries, with the front fences at a lower height. There are also examples of brick and metal and wooden fencing. The fence along St Barnabas Road would comprise the replacement of an existing fence, however the remaining fence proposed along Surley Row would result in a minor change in view from the existing green hedge as the vegetation along the highway would remain in front of the proposed fence with a trees planted inside the fence. As the site is on a prominent junction of Surley Row and St Barnabas Road and it is important to retain some vegetation to soften the impact of the boundary timber fence. Highdown school has a wooden fence along its boundary further along Surley Row.

The height of the fence has been reduced to retain the same height around the property and it is proposed to retain hedging with new additional tree planting inside the garden. It is also proposed to keep the vegetation along highways land adjacent to the boundary with Surley Row, however this is not within the control of the applicant. The proposed high wall and gate piers are proposed to be brick finished with Licata White Silicone Render to match the house. No entrance gate is proposed. The proposed fencing is not considered to detrimentally harm the character of the area. The land rises within the garden and the hedging and new trees 2m to 2.5m in height should remain visible at the corner of the plot, above the timber fencing. The proposal is considered to comply with policy CC7. A condition is proposed to require additional information relating to trees to be planted inside the fence.

Access and impact on the highway

RBC Highways have requested that the gates are to be set back by at least 5m and should not open outwards onto the public highway or obscure visibility and site lines are a material consideration. No gates are proposed. A condition to remove permitted development rights for an entrance gate is recommended ensure that a planning application would be required to consider the position of any proposed entrance gates. There should be no obstruction of the highway for deliveries of visitors entering the site.

Impact on trees and hedges

RBC Natural Environment require that replacement trees are planted for any hedging proposed to be removed to ensure that there is no net biodiversity loss on site and to soften the visual impact of the replacement fencing. New trees are recommended as a condition of planning, with additional information relating to tree sizes, species, tree pit sizes, planting and a maintenance plan.

Impact on amenity

Policy CC8 states 'Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties in terms of privacy and overlooking, visual dominance and harm to outlook.

The land rises within the site and despite the 1.8m height, it will only provide a 1m fence at the corner of the boundary from the profile of the existing boundary within the garden. The retention of the hedging and trees at a higher level than the fencing should retain privacy for the residents of 21 St Barnabas Road from cars passing the site as the rear garden is on the corner of St Barnabas Road, Tredegar Road and Surley Row, surrounded by road on both sides of the garden. The proposed boundary fencing is proposed at a height of 1.8m and should not result in any direct overlooking into surrounding houses. In this instance, due to the location of the site, the replacement fencing, open entrance, and new tree planting to soften the visual impact of the fencing, is not considered to detrimentally impact surrounding properties and complies with policy CC8.

Conclusion

The proposal is considered acceptable on the condition that existing hedge on St Barnabas Road will be retained and that new trees will be planted where hedging is proposed to be removed to soften the visual impact of the wooden fencing. No entrance gate is proposed to avoid obscuring visibility on the highway. A tree planting and maintenance condition has been agreed with the agent and a revocation of permitted development to restrict entrance gates is recommended. Complies with CC7, CC8, EN12 and TR3.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

Time line

Materials as proposed

Plans

Landscaping/Tree Planting

Permitted Development Rights Removed - Gates