

## DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

**App Ref:** 231804/HOU

**Address:** 17 Stuart Close, Emmer Green, Reading

**Proposals:** Two storey side extension

**Case Officer:** Ethne Humphreys

**Target Decision date:** Originally 1/3/2024; Extension of time agreed until 8/3/2024

### 1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site relates to a two storey semi detached property located on the north side of Stuart Close. There is a single storey detached garage to the south east of the site. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character.

### 2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for a two storey side extension following demolition of detached garage. The materials would match those of the host property.

The following plans were submitted:

Block and Location Plans 1377/4/C Proposed Elevations 1377/3/d Received 7th March 2024

### 3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 900946 Erection of storm porch to rear of house.

### 4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Nearby neighbouring properties were consulted by letter. No neighbour letters of representation received.

### 5 Internal Consultees

- 5.1 **Transport Officer:** No objection, discussed below.
- 5.2 **Ecologist:** Objection, discussed below.

### 6. 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.

### 7. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 7.1 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 2023  
National Planning Practice Guidance 2014

**Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)**

CC7 Design and the Public Realm  
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity  
EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network  
H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation  
TR3 Access Traffic and Highway-related Matters  
TR5 Car and Cycle Parking

**SPD**

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

**8. APPRAISAL**

**Character and Appearance**

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 The existing garage on site is of little design merit and there is no objection to its loss. Officers consider that there is scope for a suitably scaled extension in its place. However, the proposed extension does not achieve an appropriate degree of subservience, with a minimal set down from the main ridgeline, a width and roof design that adds substantial bulk and mass to the property and front chamfer design that appears contrived. The large expanse of flank elevation is of poor design and combined with the chamfer, creates a jarring effect when viewed from the front and side. The site occupies a particularly prominent position in the street, given its location opposite the Stuart Close junction, and its siting forward No 19 Stuart Close. Any extensions to it would therefore be particularly visible and the proposal is considered to detract from the character of the host property and the visual amenities of the wider street scene.
- 8.3 It is recognised that other properties within the vicinity feature additions including 2 storey side extensions. However, these are not directly comparable in terms of design and context.
- 8.4 Given the above, the proposal would not comply with Policies H9 and CC7 and form a reason for refusal.

**Impact on Neighbouring Properties**

- 8.5 Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not result in an overbearing impact on neighbours. 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.
- 8.6 The neighbouring property potentially most affected by the proposals is No's 19 Stuart Close located to the east of the property. Given the distance to No.19, no overbearing effects are considered to arise. No upper floor windows are proposed on the flank

elevation facing this property. Should the application have otherwise been supportable, this could have been secured via condition to prevent loss of privacy.

- 8.7 As such, there are no neighbour amenity-based objections to the proposal.

#### **Impact on Ecology**

- 8.8 Policy EN12 states that the identified Green Network shall be maintained, protected, consolidated, extended and enhanced. Development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and should protect and wherever possible enhance features of biodiversity interest on and adjacent to the application site.
- 8.9 The proposal includes works to the roof and removal of detached garage. The site is surrounded by habitat of good suitability for use by commuting and foraging bats including large linked gardens and areas of woodland less than 200m from the site to the south east and west. The Council's Ecologist has confirmed that there is a risk that the proposals may affect roosting bats and that a bat survey report is therefore required. No bat survey was submitted with the application, which is also considered unacceptable on other planning grounds. There is insufficient evidence to determine the likely impacts on bats (which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process) and this forms a further reason for refusal. Contrary to Policy EN12.

#### **Impact on Parking/Highways**

- 8.10 The proposal would result in the loss of the garage. However, there is space to accommodate 2 cars at the front of the site and the Council's Transport Officer has raised no objection in this respect.

### **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be unacceptable.

### **10. RECOMMENDATION**

#### **10.1 REFUSE**

1. The proposed extension, due to its contrived and incongruous form and appearance, together with its excessive scale, would fail to respect the character of the existing house and would result in an overly dominant, discordant feature that would relate poorly to the host dwelling. The proposal would, therefore, cause harm to the character and appearance of the existing building and, due to the site's prominent location, would result in harm to the street scene. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation) and CC7 (Design and The Public Realm) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions.
2. The application fails to demonstrate whether or not bats and other priority habitats would be adversely affected by the proposed development, contrary to Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).