

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: PL/24/0384 Householder planning permission

Address: 82 Elmhurst Road, Reading, RG1 5HY

Proposal: Conversion and extension of existing garage to provide ancillary accommodation to existing property

Applicant: Mr & Mrs J Dewsbury

Received date: 2024-03-26

Target Decision date: 2024-07-19 (EOT)

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

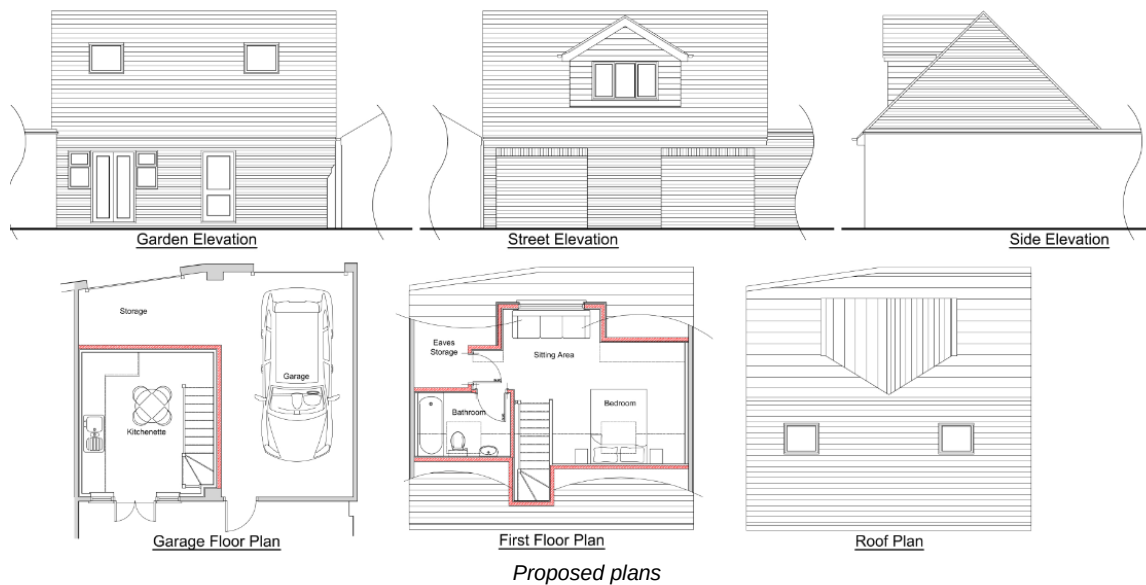
The application site comprises the double garage at the rear of the plot, facing onto Marlborough Avenue. The site is within the Redlands Conservation Area and the immediate surrounding area is comprised of detached and semi-detached dwellings in similar character.



Left: 82 Elmhurst Road as seen from Elmhurst Road. Right: The application site as seen from Marlborough Avenue.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for conversion and upward extension of the existing garage to provide ancillary accommodation to the existing property. One garage car parking space would be retained, and residential accommodation provided across part of the garage and the proposed loft space, to create a studio apartment. No external access door (apart from the existing garage doors) is proposed onto Marlborough Avenue, and the flat could only be accessed from the rear garden of the host dwelling. The upward extension comprises a shallow pitch roof with a rear dormer, facing onto Marlborough Avenue, and two roof lights on the front elevation. The applicant has stated that the apartment would be used by an au pair.



2.1. Information submitted:

Planning Statement

22-522-002 Location and Site Plan, dated July 2022

22-522-001 Existing and Proposed Plans and Elevations, dated July 2022

Received by the LPA on 27th March 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/23/1378 - Single storey side/rear extension and insertion of 1 No. side facing ground floor window – Approval granted on 22/11/2023

PL/00/0330 - Demolition and existing garages and shed and erection of two double garages – Approval granted on 19/10/2000

PL/00/0376 - Demolition of garages and shed – Approval granted on 17/10/2000

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Transport Development Control – No transport objections.
- RBC Conservation Officer – No formal comments received.

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- 80 Elmhurst Road, Reading, RG1 5HY
- 84 Elmhurst Road, Reading, RG1 5HY

No letters of representation received.

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'. However,

the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS
H9: HOUSE EXTENSIONS AND ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations Under S106 (2015)

Other documents

Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

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.

6. APPRAISAL

6.1. Design and Character

Policy CC7 states that all development should “*respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm*”.

Policy EN3 is also relevant and reinforces the requirement to enhance the appearance of Conservation Areas.

The proposed upward extension of the garage is considered harmful to the appearance of the Conservation Area. The Redlands Conservation Area Appraisal specifically identifies the modern garages along Marlborough Avenue as requiring improvement. Marlborough Avenue, characterised by garages on the south side of the street, maintains an open character due to the limited height and scale of the garages. The proposed upward extension would disrupt the existing garage roofline, appear as an isolated and incongruous addition which serves to accentuate the garages and as such, be out of character for the area and appear obtrusive and out of keeping.

Policy H9 further states that *“ancillary accommodation, such as granny annexes, will be acceptable where it would not be capable of operating as a separate dwelling which could be let or sold separately.”*

The resultant flat would have no independent access and would therefore not pose a risk of operating as a separate dwelling.

Overall, the proposal is considered harmful to the character of the Conservation Area, contrary to Policies CC7, EN3 and H9.

6.2. Residential 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;*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight;*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
- *Harm to outlook”.*

The proposal is likely to appear overbearing and visually dominant on Marlborough Avenue, as discussed. In all other respects, there are no identified risks to residential amenity.

7. CONCLUSION

The application has been assessed in line with national and local adopted policies and good planning practice, as outlined above and is considered to result in harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area contrary to those policies.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse

Due to the following reasons:

1. The proposal would fail to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area within which it is located and due to its excessive height, and massing and uncharacteristic form and appearance, which would appear out of character and obtrusive in its context. This is contrary to Policies CC7, EN3 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.