

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: PL/24/0456 Householder planning permission

Address: 50 Oakley Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7RN

Proposal: Two storey rear extension, single storey side extension and front porch, with changes to fenestration. Demolition of existing garage and conservatory. Replacement of front boundary. (amended)

Applicant: Mr Sonny Kheti

Received date: 2024-04-11

Target Decision date: 2024-08-16 (EXT)

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey semi-detached property. It is not a listed building, nor does it fall within a conservation area. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, comprising large detached and semi-detached houses.

Site visit date: 29 May 2024



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The planning permission is sought for a two storey rear extension, a single storey side extension, and a front porch, along with changes to the fenestration. The existing garage and conservatory would be demolished to make way for the proposed developments.

Following the communication, the proposal has been scaled down. The proposed two-storey rear extension would project 4 meters from the entire rear of the main house, with an eaves height of ca 4.94m and a total height of ca 7.5m. The proposed single storey side extension would extend approximately 2.82m from the entire side wall of the main house and the proposed rear extension, with an eave height of ca 2.39m and a total height of ca 4.53m. An 'L'-shaped open front porch is also included in the proposal. The proposal also includes rebuilding the front boundary to match the existing front boundary of 52 Oakley Road. All proposed bricks and tiles would match those of the existing structure. The arrangement of windows and doors would differ from the existing setup. Additionally, the proposed front door would be composite, and the patio doors would be powder-coated aluminium. All windows would be white UPVC double-glazed.

There were approximately 20 trees, which were removed following the submission of the application. The proposal includes for some new trees to mitigate this loss. For details, please refer to the Tree section within the appraisal below.

Further to the communications with the applicant, the following plans are under consideration:

- Ecology measures
- Drawing: Ecology – Ecology Measures
Received 6 August 2024.

- Drawing No: Boundary - Existing and Proposed Front Boundary Plans dated 5/8/2024
- Block Plan (Layout Plan) dated 5/8/2024
- Photo (existing front boundary of 52 Oakley Road)
Received 5 August 2024.

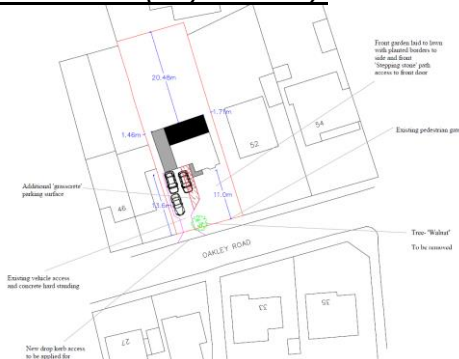
- Arboricultural Report, BS: 5837(2012), report by Sarah Duckworth, ref: 06476/2024
Received 29 July 2024.

- Tree Plan (0.3) {Rev 03/07/2024}
- Bat Survey, ref NWP/ESR-2.7.24, dated 2/7/2024
- Drawing No: SE 3.1 - Existing and Proposed Side Elevations (West) dated 30/5/2024
- Drawing No: RE 2.3 - Existing and Proposed Rear Elevations dated 3/7/2024
- Drawing No: ASE 4.3 - Existing and Proposed Alternate Side Elevations (East) dated 3/7/2024
Received 8 July 2024.

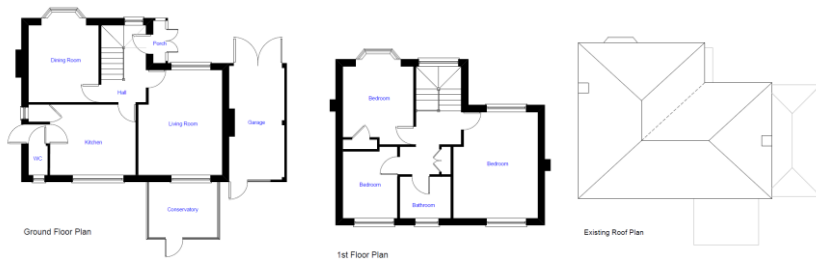
- Drawing No: RP 5.1 - Existing and Proposed Roof Plans dated 30/5/2024
- Drawing No: P GFP 7.1 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan dated 30/5/2024
- Drawing No: P FFP 8.1 – Proposed 1st Floor Plan dated 30/5/2024
- Drawing No: FE 1.1 – Existing and Proposed Front Elevations dated 30/5/2024
Received 3 June 2024.

- Location Plan
- Drawing No: E FP 6 - Existing Ground Floor and First Floor Plans
Received 11 April 2024.

Block Plan (Layout Plan):



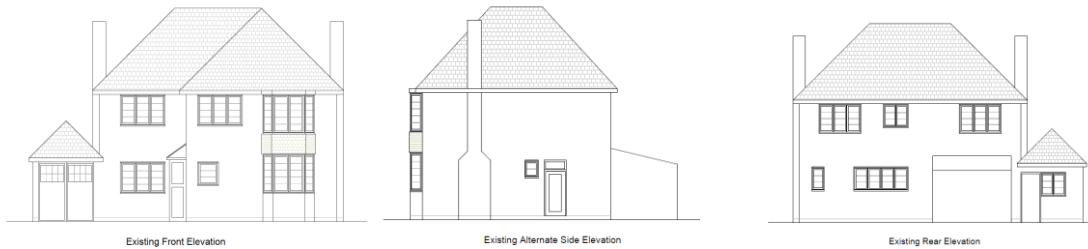
Existing Floor Plans:



Existing Front Elevation:

Existing Side Elevation (East):

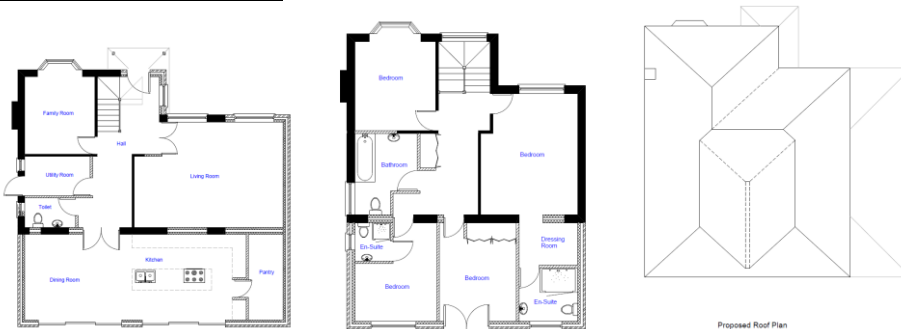
Existing Rear Elevation:



Existing Side Elevation (West):



Proposed Floor Plans:



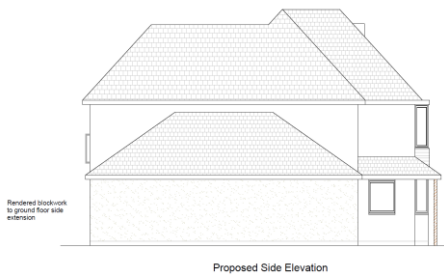
Proposed Front Elevation:

Proposed Side Elevation (East):

Proposed Rear Elevation:



Proposed Side Elevation (West):



Relevant planning history:

None.

3. CONSULTATIONS

Internal consultation:

Ecology consultee:

Regarding the bat survey, the report (Batcraft, July 2024, ref: NWP/ESR-2.7.24) is acceptable and concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. Therefore, there are no objections to this application on ecology grounds. However, the bat report had photos in showing the site had been virtually destroyed. This clearance has undoubtedly led to a loss of biodiversity, which would be contrary to EN12 of Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. It is also likely that the clearance has negatively impacted nesting birds. Given that we have records of hedgehogs and slowworms in that area (both protected species), it is probable that the clearance may have resulted in injury or death of these species, which is contrary to wildlife legislation. Since these works have already been undertaken, there can be no objections on ecology grounds. Nonetheless, I am in agreement with Natural Environment (Tree) officer that we should request a condition to help mitigate the significant tree and vegetation destruction although I would also like to add that a recommendation that the landscaping plans should include native and wildlife friendly planting. Additionally, I recommend including a condition to ensure that the new extension incorporates integral bird and bat boxes. See below:

Condition: *Prior to commencement of the development, details of biodiversity enhancements, to include two bird and two bat boxes, bricks or tiles built into the walls of the new extension shall be submitted and approved in writing by the council. A brief letter report confirming that the boxes, bricks or tiles have been installed, including a simple plan showing their location and photographs of the boxes, bricks or tiles in situ, is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.*

Reason: *To incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments in accordance with paragraph 186 of the NPPF and policy EN12 of the Reading Local Plan (2019)*

Transport consultee:

There is no existing vehicle crossing serving this property. A new vehicle crossing is proposed. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 43m would be required, plans have not been submitted illustrating visibility splays, however I am happy that they can be achieved.

A licence from the Highways Department will be required to undertake all works on the Highway which includes the introduction of a vehicle crossing. The crossing will need to be installed before construction begins.

Submitted parking plan illustrates parking on the front garden area which is deemed acceptable.

Suggested conditions:

Vehicle parking (As specified)

Vehicular access (As specified)

Tree consultee:

The application site had at least 20 trees when the planning officer visited the property. For a detailed assessment, please refer to the Tree section within the appraisal below.

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- 48, Oakley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RN
- 31, Brill Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RD
- 46, Oakley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RN
- 76, Kidmore Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7NA
- 52, Oakley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RN

Objections have been received from no.46, 48 and 52. Please note, these comments were based on the original submission and the scheme was amended as described in the appraisal below. The objections are summarised as follows:

- This property is at a higher ground level than ours and with the proximity of its east side we would like all east facing windows to be obscure glazed, top opening and non-openable to a height of 1.7m. Any replacement door to have obscure glazing (*52 Oakley Road*)
- Boundary wall to be fixed properly and with fence panels due to the uneven ground level between both properties to ensure we both retain our privacy. (*52 Oakley Road*)

Planning officer note: Regarding the fence panel, the proposal does not include the boundary and the applicant confirmed via email dated 5 August 2024, that the existing fence is owned by the neighbouring property, and the applicant is not intending on replacing it. Also, the issues regarding 'bricks/stone/soil/branches and other stuff falling' are not material to the planning consideration. Other relevant material planning matters are assessed in the report below.

- The proposed two-storey extension and pitch of the roof is overbearing. This would have a detrimental impact due to the amount of light that it would block to the rear of our property and patio, particularly in the mornings. (*46 Oakley Road & 48 Oakley Road*)
- Loss of outlook, as the view from our decking will be entirely of the side of the property, whereas currently the view is unobstructed (*48 Oakley Road*).

Planning Officer note: The Site visits for 46, 48, and 52 Oakley Road were conducted on 24 June 2024. The relevant material planning matters are assessed in the report below

4. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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.

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)
H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)
TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking)
EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network)
EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD 2021

5. 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.

Following the communication with the applicant, the proposal has been scaled down. The resulting rear extension would reduce the back-to-back distance between dwellings to 20.3m. The proposed two storey rear extension would also be set down from the ridgeline of the existing host dwelling, with a proposed depth of 4m, in compliance with the Design Guide to House Extensions 2021. Additionally, the front elevation of the proposed single storey side extension would be set back from the frontage, with a proposed width of ca 2.82m. Both proposed roofs would be hipped. Overall, the proposal is in proportion with the original house, and all proposed bricks and tiles would match the existing. Therefore, the proposal is considered to respect the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design.

Although the replacement of front boundary would be prominent in the street scene, it is considered to respect the character and pattern of neighbouring properties, as well as the appearance of the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, as it is intended to match the adjacent property at no. 52. The proposed front porch would be small in scale and set further back from the street, as would the proposed side extension. The side extension would maintain a gap between neighbouring buildings by bring the side wall away from the side boundary. The position of the windows and doors at the front would remain almost the same as the existing. Therefore, the proposal is not considered harmful to the local character, in compliance with Policies CC7 and H9 of Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Design Guide to House Extensions 2021. Although the arrangement of windows and doors would be different at the back compared to the existing arrangement, it is not considered out of character with the appearance of the original house and local environment, as they are in proportion with the rear elevation.

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. Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

Although side windows are proposed in the east elevation, they are considered acceptable, as all side windows and doors on the ground and first floors would be obscure glazed with high-level openers following the communications with the applicant. There are no identified risks in terms of blocking sunlight and daylight or creating overbearing issues, given the detached nature of the property and the fact that the proposed extensions would not extend beyond the 60-degree line and 45-degree line drawn from the mid-point of the closest windows of habitable rooms in neighbouring properties. The rear garden would still retain enough private outdoor space after the completion of the proposal.

The application site features a spacious front driveway capable of accommodating three on-site parking spaces, and relevant conditions would be included to secure the vehicle parking and access. During the second site visit on 24 June 2024, two neighbours of the application site mentioned that the building work had commenced without obtaining the planning permission, and they were suffering from noise and dust caused by the construction and demolition works, particularly smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site. Therefore, restrictions on hours of construction/demolition would be included to protect the well-being of the neighbouring properties, along with relevant informatives.

Ecology

Policies H9 states that an extension to a house or other householder development will be acceptable where it does not result in a loss of biodiversity within gardens. Policy EN12 states that on all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.

Following communications with the applicant, an ecology measures report and drawing of ecology measures were received on 6 August 2024 to avoid a pre-commencement condition. The ecology officer confirmed that the plans are acceptable. To secure the installation of the ecology measures, a condition would be included in the decision.

Trees

Policy EN14 states that Individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands will be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended. The quality of waterside vegetation will be maintained or enhanced. New development shall make provision for tree retention and planting within the application site, particularly on the street frontage, or off-site in appropriate situations, to improve the level of tree coverage within the Borough, to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the area in which a site is located, to provide for biodiversity and to contribute to measures to reduce carbon and adapt to climate change. Measures must be in place to ensure that these trees are adequately maintained. Policy CC7 states that the development will be accessed to ensure that the development proposed makes a positive contribution to the quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping.

The planning officer visited the application site on 29 May 2024 and found that there were at least 20 trees in the rear garden and one existing tree at the front, which were not mentioned in the 'Trees and Hedges' field of the application form and were not plotted on the submitted plans. Therefore, a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) were requested via email on the same day to comply with Reading Borough validation requirements and facilitate a comprehensive assessment to ensure the proposal would comply with Policy EN14 of Reading Borough Local Plan 2019. However, on 3 June 2024, the applicant stated that all existing trees in the rear garden had been removed, leaving only one tree at the front.

Following a second site visit on 24 June 2024, it was established that all trees in the rear garden had been removed, the front garden had been cleared (except for one tree on the frontage), and some ground works had already commenced. Although the applicant submitted a simple Tree Plan (0.3) (Rev 03/07/2024) on 8 July 2024, it was insufficient for the assessment, as basic tree information in line with Reading Borough validation requirements and an AIA, due to the ground works necessary on the frontage around the retained tree, would be required.

After communications with the applicant, an Arboricultural Report (ref: 06476/2024) from Duckworths Arboriculture, dated July 2024 was received on 29 July 2024. The tree officer confirmed that: *Based on the tree report the felling of the Walnut is agreed, subject to securing the replacing planting, a landscape condition (L1) will be required to secure all the landscaping.*

The applicant confirmed that he agrees to remove the existing front tree in line with the recommendation from the AIA. Relevant revised plans have been received showing the existing tree to be removed. A landscape condition will be included to secure all the landscaping to ensure that the whole proposal would not significantly harm the local green landscaping.

Overall, the proposal is considered acceptable based on the reasons listed above.

6. 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.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Approve with Conditions

Recommended Conditions:

Time limit

Approved plans

Materials (as specified)

Obscure glazing

Ecology measures

Landscaping small scale (to be approved)

Vehicle parking (As specified)

Vehicular access (As specified)

Hours of construction/demolition