

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Caversham Heights

App Ref: PL/24/0350 Householder planning permission

Address: 74 Sheridan Avenue, Caversham, Reading RG4 7QD

Proposal: Proposed part single storey and part double storey side and rear extensions to existing dwelling. (amended)

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Gareth & Heidi Webster-Davies

Received date: 2024-03-19

Target Decision date: 2024-09-19 (EXT)

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey detached house with a single-storey garden outbuilding. It is located to the southeast of the Sheridan Avenue, which is a hill. The property is not a listed building, nor does it fall within a conservation area. The surrounding area is predominantly residential.

Site visit date: 8 April 2024



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The planning permission is sought for the construction of part single-storey and part double-storey side and rear extensions following the demolition of the existing single-storey rear extension and the single-storey detached garden outbuilding. The proposed single-storey rear extension would be stepped, with a total depth of ca 6m across the entire rear of the property, while the two-storey rear and side extension would be stepped back, projecting 4m from the rear elevation of the host dwelling. The length of the proposed two-storey extension would measure ca 4.5m, while the projection from the side elevation of the host dwelling would measure 1.35m. The roof of the proposed two-storey extension would be set down from the existing ridgeline. The roof of the proposed single-storey rear extension, adjacent to No. 76, would be mono-pitched with two lanterns, while the section next to No. 72 would feature a flat roof. The proposal also includes associated internal alterations.

Additionally, the plan includes one window and two doors on the rear elevation of the proposed rear extensions. Three side windows and one door are to be installed on the southwest wall. There would be two front-facing windows included in the proposal. The proposed brickwork would match those of the existing.

Further to the discussion with the agent (see appraisal section below), the following revisions were submitted:

- Drawing No. 24605 - P012 C – Proposed Elevations received 19th September 2024.
- Bat Survey (Vesper Conservation and Ecology Ltd, 10/8/2024) received 22nd August 2024

- Drawing No. 24605 - P014 A – Proposed Plans 45 and 60 Degree Rule
- Drawing No. 24605 - P013 B – Proposed Elevations
- Drawing No. 24605 - P011 B – Proposed Roof Plan
- Drawing No. 24605 - P010 B – Proposed First Floor Plan
- Drawing No. 24605 - P009 B – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing No. 24605 - P008 B – Proposed Site Block Plan

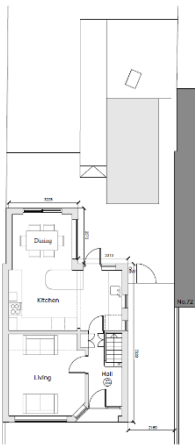
Received 17th June 2024.

- Drawing No. 24605 - P007 - Existing Elevations
- Drawing No. 24605 - P006 – Existing Elevations
- Drawing No. 24605 - P005 – Existing Roof Plan
- Drawing No. 24605 - P004 – Existing First Floor Plan
- Drawing No. 24605 - P003 – Existing Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing No. 24605 - P002 – Existing Site Block Plan
- Drawing No. 24605 - P001 – Site Location Plan

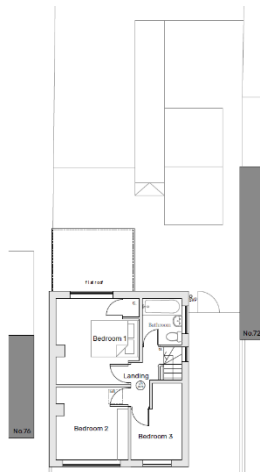
Received 20th March 2024.

Existing Plans and Elevations:

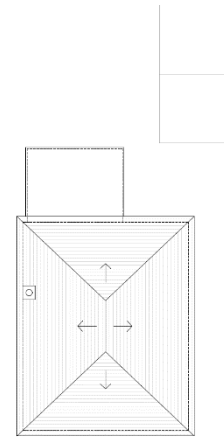
Existing Ground Floor Plan



Existing First Floor Plan



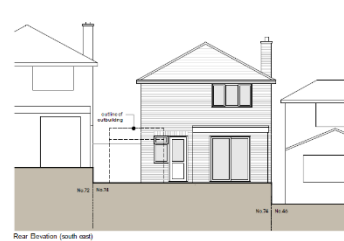
Existing Roof Plan



Existing Front Elevation & Side Elevation (SW)

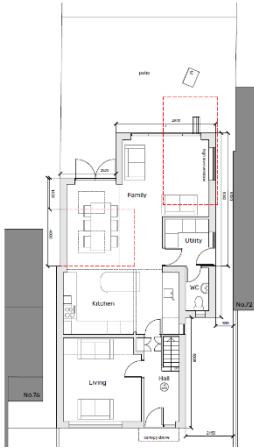


Existing Rear Elevation & Side Elevation (NE)

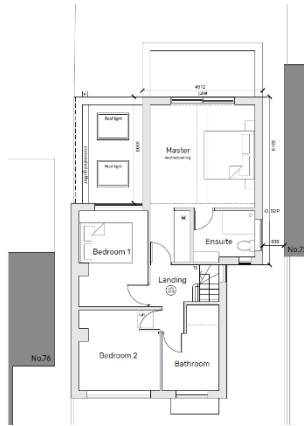


Proposed Plans and Elevations:

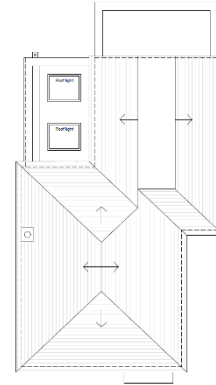
Proposed Ground Floor Plan



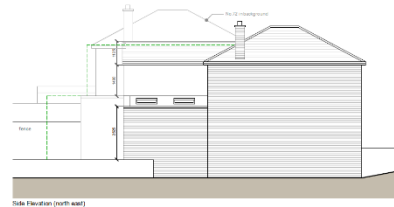
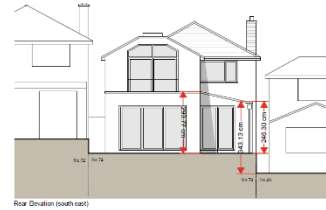
Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Roof Plan



Proposed Front Elevation & Side Elevation (SW) Proposed Rear Elevation & Side Elevation (NE)



Relevant planning history:

None.

3. CONSULTATIONS

Internal Consultation:

Ecology Consultee's comments regarding the original proposal are as follows:

The application site comprises a house in a residential area of Caversham where it is intended to add a two-storey rear and side extension. The site is surrounded by habitat of good suitability for foraging and commuting bats, including neighbouring gardens with trees, Highdown Wood Local Wildlife Site approximately 150m to the west of the site and Hemdean Bottom Local Wildlife Site lying 180m to the north of the site. The works include significant changes to the roof and there is a risk that the proposals may impact upon roosting bats.

As such, a bat survey report will need to be provided before this application can be determined. Further details are given below.

Legislation

All species of bats receive protection under UK law and it is a criminal offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (The Habitat Regulations), deliberately or recklessly to destroy or damage their roosts, or to disturb, kill or injure them without first having obtained the relevant licence for derogation from the regulations from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (the SNCO - Natural England in England).

Planning policy

Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System (this document was not revoked by the National Planning Policy Framework) states that:

“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted.”

In this case because neither the presence or otherwise of protected species, nor the extent to which they may be affected has been established, the application would not be in accordance with the above planning policy, or other planning policy in relation to biodiversity.

Survey requirements

A presence / absence bat survey is normally undertaken in two stages, firstly a preliminary roost assessment, whereby the inside and outside of the building is surveyed for bats and signs of bats. This survey can be undertaken at any time of year.

If bats are found or features within the building have the potential to support roosting bats and these will be affected by the proposals, further dusk emergence and or pre-dawn re-entry surveys during the bat active season (i.e. between May and the end of August/ sub optimally until mid-October) would need to be carried out. The applicant would then need to submit the results of the survey(s) along with any associated mitigation strategy prior to determination of the application.

Surveys should be carried out by suitably experienced ecologists who are a member of a professional organisation such as the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and / or are licensed or accredited by Natural England to survey bats.

Summary

The house may host roosting bats and to confirm whether this is the case, and if so how bats will be affected by the proposals, a bat survey will need to be carried out. The survey will need to be carried out prior to determination of the application or the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient evidence had been provided to determine the likely impacts of the proposals on bats (which are a protected species and a material consideration in the planning process).

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- 7, Woodberry Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7QG
- 8, Woodberry Close, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7QG
- 76, Sheridan Avenue, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7QD
- 72, Sheridan Avenue, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7QD

No letters of representation have been received.
Site notice has been affixed in front of the house for 21 days.

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)
EN12 (Biodiversity and The Green Network)

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.

After communication with the agent, the proposal has been scaled down overall. The proposed roof would be set down from the ridgeline of the original house and would be in proportion with the main dwelling, making the proposed part two-storey and part single-storey rear and side extension appear subservient to the main building. Although the proposed works are still large in scale, it is considered that the site can accommodate this size of development. Additionally, all proposed materials are to match those of the existing structure. There are similar rear extensions in the vicinity. Therefore, the proposal would not be out of character with the host dwelling or the local environment. There are no identified risks in terms of street view, as the proposed two-storey side extension extends only 1.35m and is set sufficiently back from the front elevation of the host dwelling, ensuring it does not detract from the local environment. Overall, the proposal is considered respectful in terms of character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider environment.

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.

Although the proposed rear extension is large in scale, it is considered acceptable since the rear garden of the plot would still retain adequate outdoor space. Furthermore, there would be three side windows in the proposed part single-storey and part double-storey rear and side extension directly facing no. 72 Sheridan Road. However, this is not considered harmful in terms of privacy and overlooking due to the stepped plot and different ground levels. Additionally, two side windows are proposed at ground level, which is lower than No. 72, and they would not provide a view into the habitable space of the neighbouring property. As for the side window proposed for the first floor, it would face directly toward a wall, be frosted, and serve an ensuite bathroom; details of obscure glazing would be secured via condition.

Following communications with the agent, the proposed part two-storey and part single-storey rear and side extension has been set back to ensure that the development would not extend beyond the 45-degree and 60-degree lines taken from the middle of the window of a habitable room in No. 76, thereby posing minimal risk of loss of sunlight and daylight. Additionally, the proposed part single-storey rear extension has been sufficiently set back to minimize any overbearing effect on No. 76 Sheridan Road.

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 communication with the agent, the Bat Survey report was submitted on 22nd August 2024. The Ecology team confirmed that the bat survey (Vesper Conservation and Ecology Ltd, 10/8/2024) concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposal is minimal. Therefore, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.

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:

Approved Plans

Materials (as specific)

Time Limit

Use of Roof Restricted

Obscure Glazing

No New Opening