

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0328 Householder planning permission

Address: 29 SYCAMORE ROAD, READING, RG2 7LX

Proposal: Single storey rear extension.

Applicant: Mr Carlos Lopes

Received date: 03/03/2025

Target Decision date: Originally 28/04/2025 EOT agree until 13/5/2025

Case Officer: James Schofield

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

There are a number of originally identical and similar terraces along Sycamore Road. The proposal site is an end of terrace dwelling dating from the 1920s. Despite the age of the dwelling, the prevailing character of the street has become less adorned and more utilitarian over time. Unfortunately, many sites replaced positive unique features of the original Arts and Crafts style with generic modern solutions of the time. Many elevations have had the original decorative brickwork or render covered in mid-twentieth century pebbledash. The original stained-glass feature windows and doors and the diamond patterned Tudor style windows are visible in only a limited number of examples now. One such stained-glass feature window is present in the front elevation of the proposal site and is a welcome reminder of the charming and unique architectural style which has suffered substantial erosion along this street over the last century. While the overall impression of the street does appear more recent and modern than it is, it remains well above average due to the quality of the original design. This includes; generous plot sizes prioritising gardens; interesting and varied roof forms; prominent chimneys originally with chimney pots; varied repeating patterns of massing, fenestration, roof forms, and arches; skilled decorative brickwork features around windows and doors, especially in the arches over shared alleys in mid-terrace dwellings. Good relatively intact examples include the front elevation of number 16 Sycamore Road (note the windows, doors, brickwork, and render), and the visible brickwork in numbers 28 and 30.

To the rear, these dwellings repeat the pattern of massing and roof forms seen in the front elevation resulting in slight outriggers. The proposal dwelling has had an unsympathetic side extension and a glass conservatory built to the rear. Neither neighbouring site to either side has had a rear extension. There is a curve in the part of Sycamore Road which resulted in a slightly triangular plot shape for the proposal site. This increases the distance between the rear elevations of number 29 and number 31.

The proposal site is not listed nor within a conservation area and there are no trees.

Site visit date: 11/03/2025

Site visit photos:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for a single-storey rear extension largely on the site of the existing rear conservatory at a depth of 4 metres, and a height of 2.8 metres set 0.6 metres away from the boundary with the attached neighbour, and 1.6 metres from the unattached neighbour. It would include a flat roof with a pyramidal skylight. In terms of depth, the slight outrigger results in a stepped rear extension. Plans considered;

Location Plan

~~Drawing Number L22-LBP Rev A Location and Block Plans (Superseded)~~

~~Drawing Number L22-EX01 – Existing Ground Floor Plan (Superseded)~~

Drawing Number L22-EX02 – Existing First Floor Plan

Drawing Number L22-EX03 – Existing Front Elevation

Drawing Number L22-EX04 – Existing Rear Elevation

Drawing Number L22-EX05 – Existing SW Facing Side Elevation

Drawing Number L22-EX06 – Existing NE Facing Side Elevation

Drawing Number L22-P01 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Drawing Number L22-P02 – Proposed First Floor Plan

Drawing Number L22-P03 – Proposed Front Elevation

~~Drawing Number L22-P04 – Proposed Rear Elevation (Superseded)~~

~~Drawing Number L22-P05 – Proposed SW Facing Side Elevation (Superseded)~~

~~Drawing Number L22-P06 – Proposed NE Facing Side Elevation (Superseded)~~

As received on the 3rd of March 2025

~~Drawing Number L22-EX01 Rev A – Existing Ground Floor Plan (Superseded)~~

~~Drawing Number L22-P01 Rev A – Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Superseded)~~

As received on the 3rd of March 2025

Drawing Number L22-LBP Rev A Location and Block Plans

Drawing Number L22-P04 – Proposed Rear Elevation

Drawing Number L22-P05 – Proposed SW Facing Side Elevation

Drawing Number L22-P06 – Proposed NE Facing Side Elevation

As received on the 28th of April 2025

Drawing Number L22-LAN – Landscape Plan

As received on the 6th of May 2025

NB: It is noted that the existing and front elevation plans do not accurately show important architectural details like decorative brickwork or the stained-glass window. However, they are sufficiently detailed for a proposal at the rear of the site. As such, the officer recommends not making reference to any plans for the front elevation in any decision notice granting approval.

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

No relevant site history found.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The site notice was posted on the 11th of March 2025 and the consultation period ran through to the 1st of April 2025. No letters of representation have been received from the public.

Trees

The Natural Environment Officer was consulted and indicated no objection to the loss of the Olive tree, but suggested requesting a replacement tree to ensure the proposal accords with policy.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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 2024

National Planning Practice Guidance 2019 onwards

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)

H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPD 2021

Tree Strategy 2021

6. APPRAISAL

Character and Appearance

Policy H9 states that alterations to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of location, materials and design and respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole. Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

It is noted that while local policy seeks to improve character generally through development, there is no specific policy in general or for this area which would help to restore or prevent the further loss of the positive design features which make this street architecturally noteworthy. Given that this proposal is aimed at the rear of the dwelling and would not harm important features in the front elevation, it is considered that the very modern and utilitarian design of the proposal is unlikely to be detrimental. Many related dwellings have had similar rear extensions without harming the streetscape. Whilst flat roof additions generally fail to improve the appearance of a property, it would remain subservient to the host dwelling with materials to match which is appropriate.

In summary, the appearance of the proposed rear extension is sufficiently sympathetic to the host dwelling. Further to the above analysis, the proposal satisfies the character considerations of local policies H9 and CC7.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not harm the privacy amenity of neighbouring sites. Policy CC8 states alterations to a house will be acceptable where they will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of existing or new residential properties.

The size and location of the proposed rear extension are within the recommendations made by the adopted Design Guide. It is noted that it would not fall within the 60-degree line discussed in 7.1.1. It is deemed that there would be no impact on neighbour's amenity in terms of overlooking, loss of light, or overbearingness provided a condition is included which precludes the conversion of the roof of the extension into a balcony without seeking planning permission.

Further to the above analysis, the design and siting of the proposed rear extension would ensure the avoidance of any loss of privacy, light, or overbearingness. Further to this analysis, the proposal is considered to meet the aims of local policies H9, H10, and CC8.

Trees

Part 'b' of Policy EN12 indicates that all development sites should not result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity. These aims are supported by Policy H9 which states that an extension will only be acceptable where it does not result in the loss of biodiversity within gardens.

There are no Tree Protection Orders on the site. The proposal includes the loss of a single Olive tree. The officer secured a replacement native tree on an amended plan which should improve the biodiversity of the site.

The proposal is considered likely to result in a slight net improvement to the biodiversity or geodiversity of the site provided a condition is included requiring the replacement tree to be planted and cared for. As such the proposal is considered to accord with the biodiversity and sustainability considerations of Policies H9 and EN12 of the local plan.

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.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions:

1. TL1 Standard time limit
2. Materials as specified
3. AP1 Approved plans
4. PD5 Use of roof restricted
5. L4A Landscape Implementation (as specified)