

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0358 Householder planning permission

Address: 108 ELGAR ROAD, READING, RG2 0BN

Proposal: Single storey rear extension including external spiral staircase

Applicant: Mr Darren Climance

Received date: 06/03/2025

Target Decision date: Originally 03/06/2025; EOT agreed until 04/07/2025

Case Officer: James Schofield

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal site is a mid-terrace dwelling with a 2.4 metre rear extension with a flat roof including a balcony. Most neighbouring sites have had similar rear extensions at the same depth. The rear garden of the site is within Flood Zones, 2, and 3. The appearance prominence of the riverside rear gardens are a positive and important part of the character of the dwellings on this side of Elgar Road.

Site visit date: 13/05/2025

Site visit photos:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development is for a single-storey rear extension off the back of the existing rear extension at a depth of 3 metres, for the full width of the site, an eaves height of 2.4 metres, and total height of 2.7

metres. The proposal includes two large lantern lights which add an additional 0.35 metres to the roof height but are set away from boundaries Plans and considered;

Covering Letter

Drawing No. 25/ERR/01 Existing Lower Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No. 25/ERR/02 Existing South and East Elevations

Drawing No. 25/ERR/03 Existing North and West Elevations

Drawing No. 25/ERR/04 Proposed Lower Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No. 25/ERR/05 Proposed East and West Elevation

Drawing No. 25/ERR/06 Proposed North Elevation

Drawing No. 25/ERR/07 Proposed South Elevation

Drawing No. 25/ERR/08 Proposed Site and Location Plans

As received on the 6th of March 2025

Flood Risk Assessment

As received on the 9th of April 2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

No relevant site history found.

4. CONSULTATIONS

The site notice was posted on the 13th of May 2025 and the consultation period ran through to the 3rd of June 2025. No letters of representation have been received from the public.

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)

H9 (House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation)

H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space)

EN18 (Flooding and Drainage)

SPG/SPD

A Design Guide to House Extensions SPD 2021

Other

Preparing a flood risk assessment: standing advice 2015

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.

The appearance of the proposed rear extension is similar to that of the current one, and of those in the surrounding area. No detrimental impact would be introduced purely on the basis of materials or forms used in the design.

The footprint of the dwelling would be increased significantly beyond the existing modest extension. The length of the resultant extension is out of scale compared to the footprint of the host dwelling. This would result in harm to the appearance of the dwelling to which it relates and the rhythm of built form to the rear of the terrace to which it is attached. The proposal would also reduce the useability of the gardens of both the dwelling and adjacent sites in terms of their amenity. See below for further discussion of the impact on amenity.

Furthermore, due to the sloping elevation of the site, access to the rear garden could become more difficult due to increasing the already marked change in levels between the rear extension and the garden. The design seems to acknowledge this by proposing a spiral staircase linking the roof/balcony. This staircase is not an appropriate addition to the building in itself, and would appear to seek to perpetuate the informal use of flat roofs as balconies. The spiral staircase would be a visually prominent industrial solution in a residential setting. No sectional plan demonstrating the levels of the proposal have been submitted with the proposal. It is therefore not possible to fully assess the impacts of the proposal, including on neighbouring properties, which may result in a significant height of development relative to ground levels over the extent of the proposal. The appearance of and prominence of the riverside rear gardens are a positive and important part of the character of the dwellings on this side of Elgar Road. As such, it is important to ensure development does not unduly harm this feature or lead to harm to the character of adjacent sites. The applicant has therefore failed to demonstrate suitably that the proposal would not have a significant negative impact in this regard.



In summary, the appearance of the proposed rear extension is sufficiently sympathetic to the host dwelling in terms of materials and forms, however, the proposal is out of scale with the host dwelling and has failed to demonstrate that there would not be unacceptable harm to host dwelling and the garden and those of neighbouring sites. As such, the proposal does not satisfy the character considerations of local policies H9, H10, and CC7.

Residential Amenity

Policy H9 states that an extension will be acceptable where it does not harm the 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 proposed rear extension would increase the overall depth of the rear extension from 2.4 metres to 5.4 metres. The adopted Design Guide to House Extensions (2021) SPD seeks to ensure the established pattern of extensions are considered. The SPD also advises that a rear extension should be limited to 4m, though extensions in terms of height and length should be derived from the circumstances of the application site. The existing pattern of the terrace of dwellings is generally extensions at a uniform length along the rear of the dwellings, with some exceptions. This proposal is 1.4 metres beyond the most generous interpretation of the upper limit in the guidance, and would mean the extension would come directly up to the boundary of the adjacent sites at a height of 2.7 metres for a depth of 3 metres beyond their rear extensions. This is the most usable part of these relatively narrow but clearly well-loved rear gardens. The depth, height, and location of the proposal would harm the enjoyment of these spaces significantly counter to Policy H10. It is noted that the proposal would fall within the 60-degree line discussed in 7.1.1 of the Design Guide. This means the depth would likely harm the outlook for neighbouring dwellings to an unacceptable degree.

The proposed spiral staircase demonstrates the degree to which the proposal aims to rely on the roof of the rear extension to serve as a link between the ground floor and the basement levels. If the scheme were to be recommended for approval, the use of the flat roof as a balcony would have to be restricted by condition to ensure no impacts from its use as a roof terrace onto neighbouring properties. It is not clear from the plans what the spiral staircase would have been made from. Typically, they are made out of steel, and generate large amounts of noise. Additionally, this would further worsen the overlooking and privacy

concerns as it would form an additional viewing angle even further in the garden. As mentioned above, this is not a suitable solution for this site given the private residential setting and its quiet restful character.

At present, these dwellings have similarly deep extensions which helps to ensure a relatively good relationship can exist between neighbouring sites, and that it is relatively difficult to look into the windows of neighbouring sites rear elevations from the rooftop balcony. The proposal would harm this arrangement considerably resulting in an unneighbourly arrangement overall. The proposal would introduce loss of light, privacy due to the much deeper roof/balcony, harm outlook, and introduce a sense of overbearingness for neighbouring dwellings and the most usable parts of their rear gardens. It is noted that the effective height of the rear extension would likely be much taller for neighbouring sites due to the sloping gradient of the gardens.

Further to the above analysis, the design and siting of the proposed single-storey rear extension would result in a loss of privacy, light, harm outlook, and introduce a sense of overbearingness. Further to this analysis, the proposal is considered to **not meet** the aims of local policies H9, H10, and CC8.

Flood Risk

The proposed development is within Flood Zones 2 and 3. Policy EN18 indicates proposed development will be directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding in the first instance following the Sequential and Exceptions Test set out in the NPPF. Paragraph 164 of the NPPF indicates that “applications for some minor development and changes of use should not be subject to the sequential or exception tests but should still meet the requirements for site-specific risk assessments...” Footnote 51 indicates that this includes householder development, small non-residential extensions (with a footprint of less than 250 m²) and changes of use; except for changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site, where the sequential and exception tests should be applied as appropriate.

The proposed extension is within the size threshold and the flood-risk assessment indicates they will implement flood-proofing measures where appropriate. However, it is noted the FRA does not address the floor height relative to the flood height. As such, we cannot ascertain whether or not if the 600mm above floor level proposed is actually sufficient for meeting the requirements of floor preparedness in accordance with national flood guidance referenced above.

As such, the proposal does not accord with the local Policy EN18 and is not deemed acceptable by the Environment Agency’s standing advice for development proposals of this size.

CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to **NOT** be acceptable on that basis. Reasons for refusal.

1. Detrimental impact on amenity.
2. Proposal would result in cumulative rear extension which is out of proportion to the host dwelling.
3. Failure to demonstrate building levels for flood risk