

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Church

App Ref: PL/25/0806 Householder planning permission

Address: 57 BIRDHILL AVENUE, READING, RG2 7JU

Proposal: Retrospective application for a single storey rear extension and rear side change in garden level.

Applicant: Mrs JASPREET KAUR

Received date: 02/06/2025

Target Decision date: 28/07/2025

Extension of Time agreed with agent until 11/08/2025

Case Officer: Gary Miles

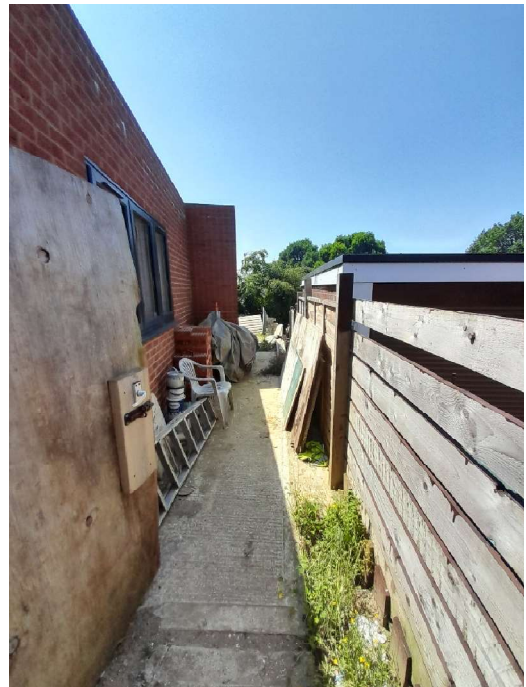
1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a 2-storey semi-detached property, located towards the western end of Birdhill Avenue. Properties are constructed from red brick and red tiled pitched roofs and have distinct gaps between the properties. The natural topography of the rear garden including the gardens of the adjacent properties slopes steeply downgradient away from the rear elevation of the properties. The original sloping rear garden has been raised up using fill material and extended further back into the original rear garden-effectively extending the flat topography to create an area to construct the unauthorised structure. The property has been subject to a ground floor flat roofed rear extension. The original garden space to the front has been lost to hardstanding, and the rear garden has been reduced through development and consists of an accumulation of building materials and general rubbish. A number of nearby properties have been subject to subservient single storey extensions to the rear. The property is not listed, nor is it located within a conservation area.

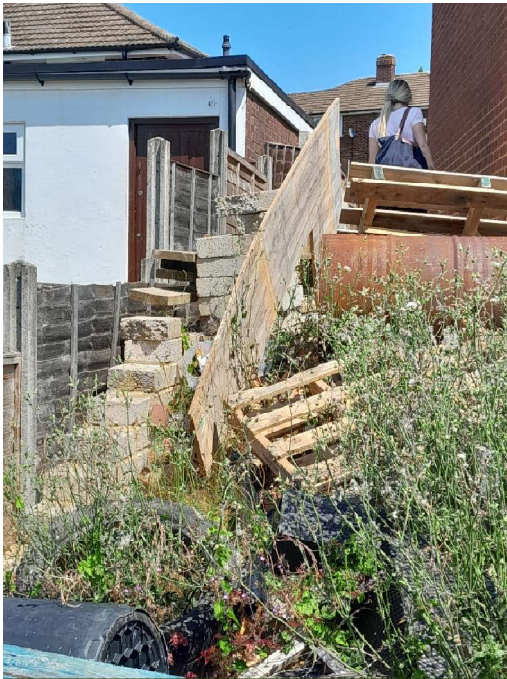
Site visit date: 19th June 2025



Looking towards front elevation.



Looking along side (westerly) elevation, showing new extension on left, with unauthorised extension and raised ground level in the distance.



Looking towards new unauthorised ground level. Looking towards rear elevation (south) of unauthorised development measuring 4.67m by 3.3m



Photo shows unauthorised raised ground level and unauthorised structure in proximity to the neighbour.



Photo shows steep gradient of rear garden and accumulations of building waste in rear garden.



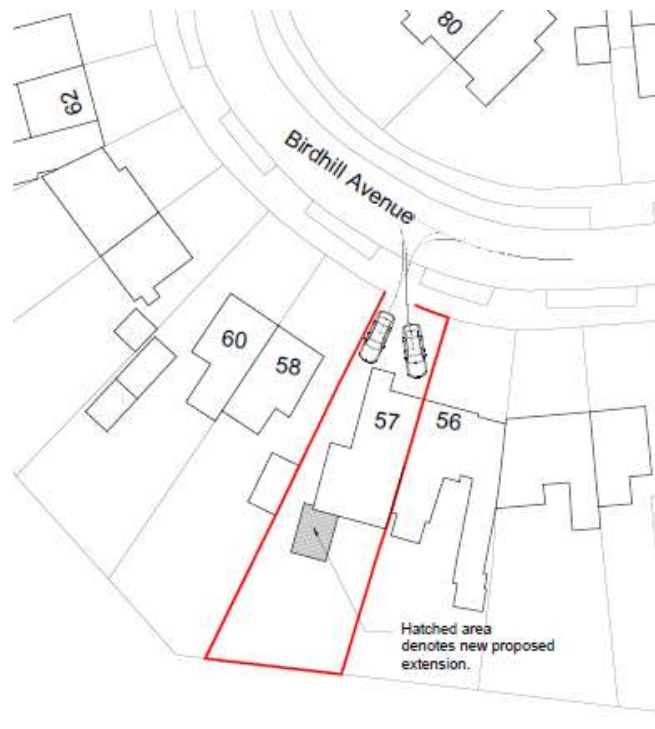
Google maps, showing application site and layout of neighbouring properties, gardens and difference in ground levels - front to back as well as side to side. The image shows the previous application PL/21/1576 under construction.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

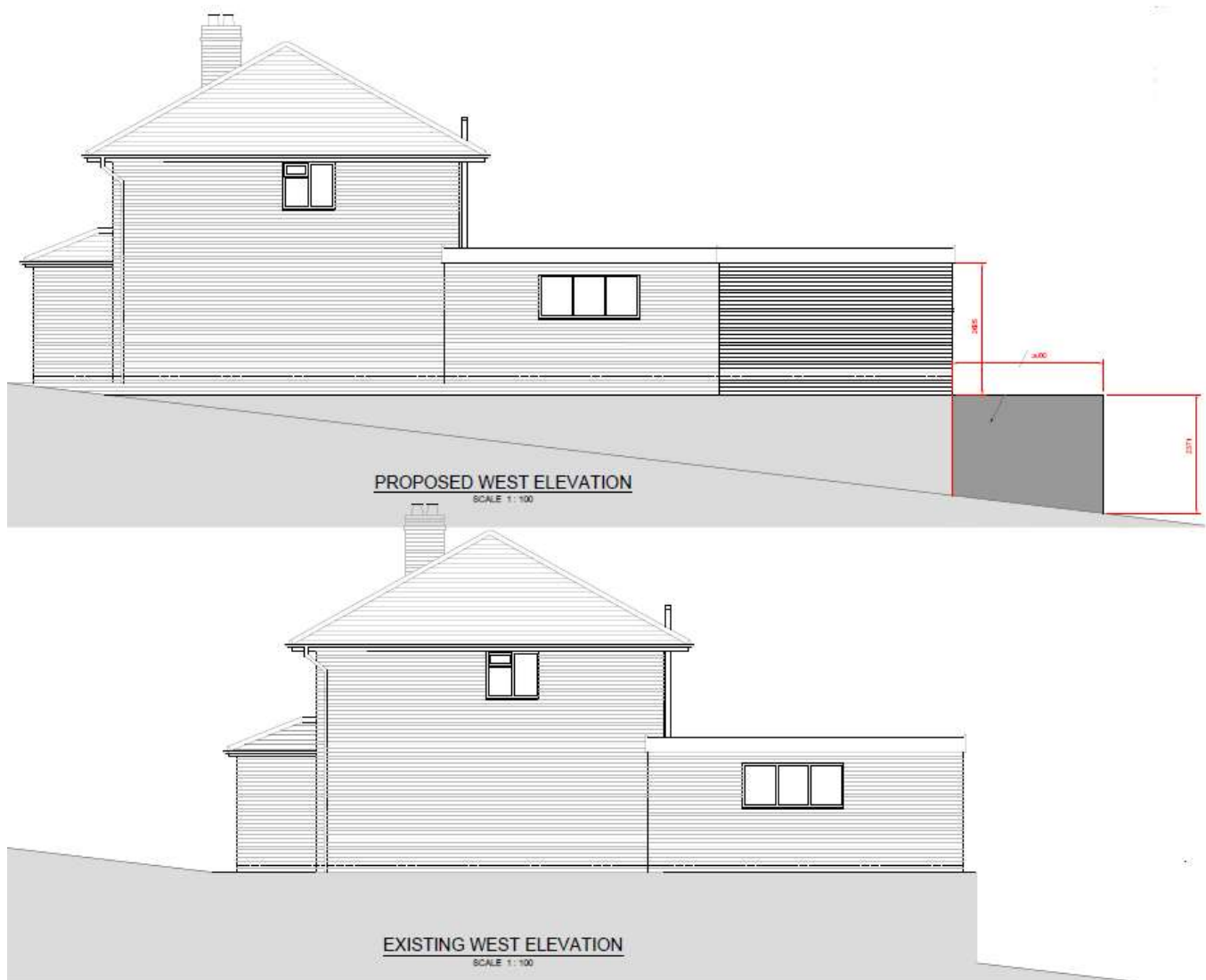
The application consists of retrospective permission for a single storey rear extension and rear and side change in garden level. The structure measures 4.67m deep, by 3.31m wide across the back, and has a parapet wall construction with max height of 2.7m and an eaves height of 2.4m. An area of garden approximately 5m projection has been raised. The materials broadly reflect those used on the existing property.

Plans considered:

Drawing no: P1258B-01-Location & Block Plan, dated May 25
Drawing no: P1258-02-Existing Plans and Elevations, dated Sep 21
Drawing no: P1258B-03-Plans & Elevations 9Proposed) dated Sept 21
Drawing no: P1258-04-Location & Block Plan (Parking Layout Plan) dated May 25
Drawing no: P1258B-05-Ground Level (Existing and Proposed), dated May 25
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 2nd June 2025



Site Layout Plan



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/21/1576 – Proposed single storey rear extension, single storey side extension and front porch extension. (amended) – Approved November 2021

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

None.

External

A planning notice was attached to nearby street furniture on 19th June 2025 and left in place for a minimum of 21 days for the statutory public consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received.

5. 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. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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)

7. APPRAISAL

Character & Appearance

Policy CC7 sets out relevant considerations for design. All development must enhance the character and appearance of Reading in which is located. In particular the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, height, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line.

It is considered that the unauthorised development has an overly dominant appearance due to the awkward arrangement of incremental extensions to the original stepping outwards and down the garden. This harmful arrangement is accentuated by the artificially raised land around the extension creating a plinth on which the extension appears as an obtrusive addition to the garden. The resulting arrangement dominates the original house, is incongruent in appearance and inappropriate siting, fails to respect the character and appearance of the host building with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the wider area in terms of design and scale. The development reduces the spaciousness around the current semi-detached properties.

The unauthorised development at 57 Birdhill Avenue layout adversely impacts the distinctive pattern of the rear space and rear gardens of neighbouring properties in Birdhill Avenue.

The unauthorised development is harmful and fails to comply with policies H9 and CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

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.

By virtue of the volume of unauthorised garden level works along with the height of the development, privacy and the overbearingness severely impacts neighbouring residential amenity for 58 Birdhill Avenue.

Officers note the rear gardens of the neighbouring properties are largely unaltered and mostly laid to lawn and retain shrubs and greenery. The unauthorised development at 57 Birdhill Avenue layout and unauthorised garden level works adversely impacts the residential amenity for residents using their rear gardens of the neighbouring properties at 56 and 58 Birdhill Avenue. Residential amenity enjoyment of outdoor space is further compromised due to the untidiness of the garden at the host property.

At the time of the visit, officers noted that the rear garden cluttered with left over building materials and construction waste, overgrown vegetation and dog excrement.

The proposal is detrimental to residential amenity and fails to comply with policies CC8, H9 and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed and is considered unacceptable as it is an obtrusive and visually dominant addition which fails to integrate with or respect the character of the existing building and wider streetscene. The prominent position of the application site would cause the unauthorised extension and garden level groundworks to appear obtrusive within the street scene and would reduce the existing spaciousness to the rear of the property. Harmful to residential amenity in terms of loss of light and overbearing effects, loss of outdoor amenity to the adjoining neighbour. The proposal is contrary to policies CC7, CC8, H9 and H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). the Council's Supplementary Planning Document Design Guide to House Extensions (2021) and Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

9. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE

1. The development by reason of its inappropriate scale, layout and appearance, resulting in an awkward arrangement of incremental extensions to the original dwelling and accentuated by the artificially raised land around the extension, appears as an obtrusive and incongruous addition to the garden which fails to respect the character and appearance of the host building and the street as a whole, with consequent harm to the character and appearance of the area. The development is therefore contrary to policy CC7 & H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
2. The development by reason of its inappropriate scale and siting and the raised garden level results in an overbearing form of development which fails to respect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, with consequent harm to the privacy and the enjoyment of the neighbouring garden. The development is therefore contrary to policy CC8 & H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.