

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park

App Ref: 211552/HOU

Address: 129 Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 7BB

Proposals: Demolition of garage and single storey part of original house, proposed ground floor rear and side extensions and two storey rear extension, increased front canopy, and internal alterations.

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Applicant: Dr Yassir Javaid

Date received (valid from): 17 September 2021

Extended Target Decision date: 17 January 2022

1. INTRODUCTION

The application site sits on a large plot on the northern side of Whiteknights Road. The University of Reading Whiteknights Campus (Early Gate entrance) is located approximately 50m to the east. At the entrance of the University are a pair of gate houses that are Grade II Listed. They are the entrance to the former historic Estate for Erleigh House. Properties in the vicinity are primarily detached properties with many dating from the 1910- 1930s which are of similar size and scale. The existing property was constructed in the 1920s and was a former Vicarage to the Grade II Listed St. Peters Church, Earley. An adjacent bungalow has recently been granted planning for a rear first floor extension.

The property is not within a conservation area, however it is a non-designated heritage asset.

Due to unforeseen circumstances a site visit cannot be undertaken however the site has been assessed using google earth and google maps and the agent provided photos to be considered.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for the demolition of garage and single storey part of original house, proposed ground floor rear and side extensions and two storey rear extension, increased front canopy, and internal alterations.

Materials are proposed to match or compliment the exiting dwelling.

Plans considered

2822 001 P4 Site Location Plan

2822 002 P6 Existing and Demolition Plans

2822 005 P18 Proposed Plans

2822 006 P10 Existing and Proposed 3D views

2822 007 P11 Proposed Block Plan

4429 Arboricultural Implications Assessment Report 20 August 2021

4429 Arboricultural Implications Plan

4429 Arboricultural Tree Protection Plan

RT-MME152004-01 (PEA) - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Heritage Statement and Impact Assessment for Planning, 9 September 2021

2822 C001P5 129 Whiteknights Road DAS 210915

865-LA-P-01 Landscaping strategy plan

As received 17 September 2021

2822 C001P3 Issue for Pre-app 13/07/2021

As received 27 October 2021

2822 004 P15 Existing and Proposed Street Elevations

2822 003 P16 Existing and Proposed Elevations
865-LA-P-02 Detailed planting plan
As received 7 December 2021

2822 009 P1 Window details front façade
RT-MME152004-02 Rev A (PRA) - Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, August 2021
RT-MME-156393 Preliminary bat roost assessment, December 2021
RT-MME153229 Rev A - Dusk Emergence and Dawn Re-entry surveys, December 2021
As received 10 December 2021

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

201525 Erection of replacement dwelling with integral garage following demolition of existing buildings. Refused 29 January 2021

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 The following addresses were consulted by letter.

12 Earley Hill Road, Reading, RG6 7BJ
15 Holmes Road, Reading, RG6 7BH
127 Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 7BB
17 Holmes Road, Reading, RG6 7BH
149 Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 7BD
131 Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 7BB

A site notice was sent to the agent and was displayed at the site on 27 September 2021. An observation in support of the proposal was received from 127 Whiteknights Road, stating the plans would significantly enhance the building and area and from their perspective do not consider there to be any impact from the proposed development.

Internal Consultations

Transport

Transport had no objections subject to a condition and provided the following feedback:

The proposed site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically these areas are within 400m of a Reading Buses high frequency 'Premier Route', which provides high quality bus routes to and from Reading town centre and other local centre facilities.

The loss of the existing double garage will result in the loss of 2 parking spaces. Submitted plans indicate a double garage is to be provided following the demolition of the existing double garage. In accordance with the Council's current Parking Standards document the recommended internal dimension of a double garage 7m x 5.5m. The dimensions of the garage proposed are in excess of this and therefore deemed acceptable. In addition to this there is also additional parking on an area of hard standing served via an existing access. Water run-off from the dwelling onto the public highway is not permitted, an appropriate method of drainage needs to be provided within the property curtilage including the use of suitable permeable surfacing materials. No alterations are being proposed to the existing access.

In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a minimum of 2 cycle parking spaces for the new dwelling, in a development of this nature a secure garden shed would be deemed acceptable, however given the size of the proposed garage cycles can be stored within it.

It is assumed that bins will be brought to the property boundary for roadside collection as is the case currently.

DC1 VEHICLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED)

IF3 Highways

I24 Do not damage the verge

Natural Environment

Natural Environment had no objections to the proposal following updated landscaping and arboricultural information submitted, subject to conditions. The following comments were provided:

All the details are now there and are acceptable (subject to GS Ecology comments), hence that this should be an approved plan (along with the AMS) and condition L4A attached (along with L7A), however this standard condition needs to be amended to include the 5 year replacement period:

L4A LANDSCAPE IMPLIMENTATION (AS SPECIFIED)

The hard and soft landscaping of the development hereby permitted shall be carried out, in accordance with the approved landscaping plans and documents. The soft landscaping shall take place no later than during the first planting season following the date when the development hereby permitted is ready for occupation or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to ensure the satisfactory implementation of the landscaping hereby approved in accordance with Policy CC7, EN12 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

L7A

Protective measures, including fencing, ground protection, supervision and working procedures shall be carried out in accordance with the Tree Protection Plan 4429.Whiteknights.Hives.TPP. Any deviation from the works prescribed or methods agreed in the report will require prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to ensure that reasonable measures are taken to safeguard trees in the interests of local amenity and the enhancement of the development itself in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Ecology

Natural Environment had no objections to the proposal subject to a condition.

The application site comprises a detached two-storey house and its curtilage where it is proposed to add single storey side/rear extension and a two storey rear extension and demolish the existing garage and rear extension. Bat surveys were carried out in 2020 during which no bat roosts were found.

An updated Preliminary Bat Survey (Middlemarch Environmental, December 2021) has been submitted and again found no evidence of use by roosting bats in the main house and no significant changes in bat roosting features. The report therefore concludes that it is unlikely that the building currently hosts a bat roost but as bats may roost in the building in the future (there are a number of features suitable for use by roosting bats, and dusk and dawn surveys have not been carried out since 2020) the report includes a precautionary mitigation strategy to ensure that bats are not harmed and a condition should be set to ensure that this is implemented; wording is given below. In summary subject to the condition below there are no objections to this application on ecology grounds.

Condition: The development is to be carried out in accordance with the recommendations given in section 6 (Precautionary Mitigation Strategy) of the bat survey report (Middlemarch Environmental, dated December 2021- ref: RT-MME-156393) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the council.

Reason: To ensure that bats, a protected species, are not adversely affected by the proposals.

If they are going to install nest boxes it would be best if they were to be built into the dwelling such as these universal swift bricks: https://www.swift-conservation.org/universal_swift_nest_brick02.pdf

Heritage

Heritage had no objections to the proposal and provided the following comments:

Further to on-going discussions with you and the owners consultant, I have examined the newly submitted street elevations and raise no objections, including alterations to the front door canopy.

It is a huge improvement to earlier proposals for the site which included demolition of the existing former church manse. The current scheme is now considered acceptable, and includes retention of the heritage building and is supported.

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Recent legal cases have established that under section 70(3) the general power to grant planning permission under section 70(1) is expressly subject to section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 72(1) provides that the local authority has a statutory duty that:

‘with respect of any building or other land in a conservation area.....special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Reading Borough Council Planning Policy

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019) EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment states:

Historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;

- Other features with local or national designation, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and historic parks and gardens.

Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their settings. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located.

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'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

National Policy

NPPF July 2021

National Planning Practice Guidance

Local policy

Reading Borough Council Local Plan (2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaption to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

CC9: Securing Infrastructure

H1: Provision of Housing

H2: Density and Mix

H5: Standards for New Housing

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN4: Locally Important Heritage Assets

EN6: New Development in a Historic Context

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Design guide to House extensions (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)

6. APPRAISAL

Assessment

Principle of Development

In principle there are no objections an extension to the existing dwelling, the demolition of the single storey rear element and existing garage or to internal alterations, however it should be

noted that any development should be subservient to the existing property to protect its classification as a non-designated heritage asset.

The principle of development is supported subject to compliance with any other relevant policy within the Local Plan.

The main issues in the consideration of this proposal are the impact of the design on the character of the area, heritage, impact on neighbours, the natural environment and biodiversity, parking and sustainability.

Design & Character

Policy CC7 in Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 states that “All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located”. There is no objection to the design of the proposed shelter structure.

A previous application 201525 had proposed to demolish the existing house however the current proposal is to retain most of the original building. The design is proposed to integrate and compliment with the host building with materials to match, whilst incorporating further ancillary accommodation whilst respecting the existing building. The proposed rear extension will not be visible from Whiteknights Road.

It is therefore considered that the proposed rear single storey extension will not be obtrusive at the site and will not impact on residential amenity or character of the area, as it will be set back from the Whiteknights Road and it will be sufficiently separated, set back and screened from the site boundaries.

Heritage impact of the development

The dwelling was originally built as a vicarage to St Peter’s Church, which is not particularly close to the site, and the two buildings cannot be seen together from any viewpoint. To the south of the site, there are two gatehouse lodges which were built in the first half of the 19th century and are listed Grade II. The site is not in a conservation area. The building is in need of renovation.

Having considered the proposal in accordance with Policy EN1 and with regard to the impact new development would have on the historic context (Policy EN6), it is not considered that the development would harm the setting of the nearby Listed Reading University gates to an unacceptable degree. The application site is located some 50m away, and the Listed Gates are set back from the highway by approx. 17m. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of impact on these heritage assets in this instance.

The front elevation of the non-designated heritage asset will be retained with the majority of works for the proposed extension are to the rear of the property, the replacement garage is set back from the front elevation and will not detract from the character of the main building. Materials are proposed to match or complement the existing building and the proposed replacement windows are considered acceptable and would not be out of keeping.

Any harm resulting in the loss of a small part of the original building to be demolished is considered to be outweighed by the sympathetic design that compliments the main building. The Conservation officer had no objections to the proposal. The proposal would not harm and would preserve the character of the non-designated heritage asset in accordance with Policy EN1. The Local Authority has therefore discharged their duties under the relevant section of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Neighbouring Amenity

Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity of the Reading Local Plan states that “development will only be acceptable where it will not cause a significant detrimental impact to the living environment of neighbouring residents in terms of privacy and overlooking, access to sunlight and daylight and visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development”.

The structure would be located away from neighbouring houses at 127 and 131 Whiteknights Road. It does not result in any significant increase in overlooking or loss of daylight due to the size of the plot, existing fenestration and orientation of the existing dwellings. 127 Whiteknights Road has written in support of the proposed development. The proposed extension is not considered harmful to visual amenity due to its setback position to the rear, set away from neighbouring boundaries with adjacent gardens and the replacement garage and games room is stepped in from the boundary with 127 Whiteknights Road. It is considered that the proposed rear extension would not be overbearing or result in any significant overlooking onto any neighbouring properties.

Transport

There are no transport issues to this application subject to a condition. Adequate parking provision has been demonstrated and will be retained.

Trees and ecology

Proposed development arboricultural assessment, plans, tree protection plans and planting plans are proposed to improve the biodiversity at the site. A condition is proposed to ensure that works are completed as outlined in the approved documents.

The ecologist has no objections subject to a condition. Updated bat surveys have been provided by the applicant.

Other issues

Building Control

The proposal will require building regulation approval in relation to structural design.

CIL

The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on 1st April 2015. CIL is a way of securing financial contributions towards infrastructure from new development, and partially replaces the Section 106 planning obligation regime. It is a set charge per sq m of floorspace for different uses, and, unlike Section 106, it is non-negotiable. It applies to developments which result in at least one dwelling; where the space has not been in lawful use for 6 months within the last 3 years or 100 sq m of new floorspace. For this approved development the CIL status is CHARGEABLE. If chargeable you will be sent a CIL Liability Notice with the calculated amount soon. CIL becomes payable on commencement of the development or by instalments.

For more information go to:

http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/2791/Community-Infrastructure-Levy-Advice-to-Applicants/pdf/CIL_Advice_to_Applicants.pdf

7. CONCLUSION

The development is not considered harmful to the character or appearance of the site or its surroundings and does not have a detrimental impact on the original building or neighbouring properties. Subject to relevant condition(s), the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the Policies set out within the Local Development Plan, and as such planning permission is recommended for approval.

8. RECOMMENDATION
Application Permitted