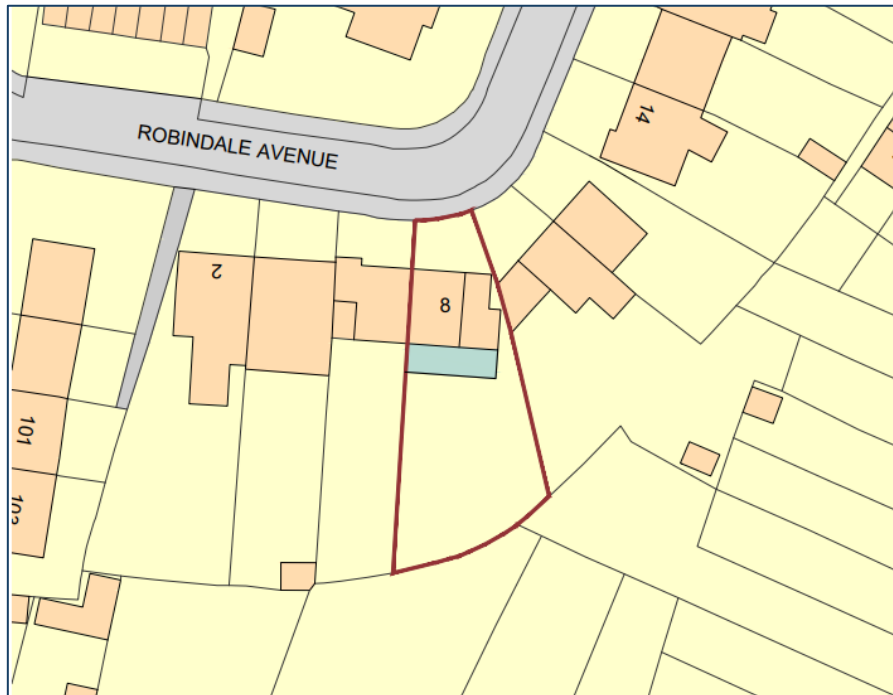


PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT.

8 Robindale Avenue, Earley, Reading, Wokingham RG6 7JR

Proposal: Householder application for the proposed erection of a ground floor rear extension and associated alterations.





Introduction

The application site is a 20th century semi-detached family dwelling of face brick and tile located within a generous plot to the south side of Robindale Avenue in Early.

It is located in the built-up settlement boundary for planning purposes and has similar established family homes adjacent to either side (east & west), many of which have been the subject of similar rear extensions in the past.

The application seeks permission to erect a ground floor rear extension with associated internal alterations.

No change is proposed to the access or parking arrangements and there are no existing trees or other significant landscape features that will be impacted by the proposals.

The dwelling/site is not:

- a Listed Building (or within the setting of a Listed Building)
- within a Conservation Area
- within the designation Greenbelt
- outside of a Settlement boundary (i.e. not Countryside)

There is no relevant recent planning application or appeal history for the site.

The application site lies on a road typified by similar semi-detached family homes in relatively generous plots. The street scene / public realm views will not be impacted by the proposed development which is located to the rear of the property.

The proposal seeks to address the existing property's shortcomings whilst also directly addressing the importance of securing the property in its optimum viable use as a family home and to improve its related functionality and sustainability credentials.

The proposal presents an interesting and noteworthy contemporary uplift of an existing residence and maximises opportunities presented by its attendant plot.

The new design integrates elements of the existing house into new energy efficient improvements that introduce positive enhancements both to the appearance of the property and the way it functions and meets future expectations.

See existing and proposed rear / side elevations below.

(Plan extracts not to scale)



Existing elevations (rear & Side)



Assessment

Being within the built settlement the principle of residential extensions and alterations is acceptable.

The new addition is not considered to be 'disproportionate' in size, and remains commensurate with the overall plot size and configuration for the existing dwelling which remains comparable to properties within close proximity.

In this case therefore the proposed addition and related alterations, included consideration of its site context to avoid negative impacts to the appearance or setting of the property and/or wider area and to the reasonable residential amenities of adjoining occupiers.

The Government's NPPF 2023 attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design being a key aspect of sustainable development and should contribute positively to making places better for people.



It emphasises the importance to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings and provides for a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It makes it clear that for decision taking (on applications for planning permission) this means:

- approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay;
- where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or

ii. specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

The presumption is therefore that planning permission should be granted unless there are good reasons in an up-to-date plan to resist such.

Of key importance here also is guidance at Paragraph 135 which states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;

b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);

d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users;



The proposal is not in conflict with any of these overarching national planning policy objectives.

Indeed, the provision of more flexible accommodation within the home that can be adapted to offer 'lifetime living opportunities' in the future and immediate sustainability and visual improvement gains as part of the new build, is considered very important in providing a long term sustainable future for the property and how it functions as a family home in accordance with overarching planning policy, guidance and advice.

The proposal remains compliant with the Borough Design Guide in respect of: Residential amenity, Design / Character, Garden depth, Separation distances and Adopted parking standards.

The design of the extension to the rear of the dwelling comprises a single storey rear addition under a low mono-pitch roof with rooflights to create a flexible family kitchen / dining family / garden room that is appropriately considered. It is modest in scale and relates well to the host building.

This element of the scheme would have negligible impact on the character of the area, given its position at the rear of the building.

Given the location and design of the extended elements, and positioning of fenestration, there are also no adverse impacts upon neighbouring amenity.

This also addresses design guidance that looks to achieve homes that provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support and improve the health and well-being of their occupants providing comfortable, safe, accessible and sustainable living environments to accommodate the changing needs of residents throughout their lifetimes enabling them to remain independent for longer.

The promotion of health and well-being is also ensured through the provision of good quality and quantity of daylight/sunlight and sufficient ventilation to provide fresh air, reduce the build-up of moisture and prevent overheating to assist in avoiding designed-in obsolescence and dependence on large amounts of energy/resources.

The proposals address the important relationship between 'quality of life' and 'place' – both in terms of the aesthetic qualities of good design (creating moments of joy and delight) and the value of creating sustainable social environments where the owners have greater control over buildings and how they use them with the use of emerging technologies to improve the functionality and comfort of internal spaces.



Other Matters.

Parking & Access

The application has been considered against the adopted local plan parking standards and it is considered that the proposed development would not have an undue impact upon the highways network and is considered acceptable in this regard. The existing access, garage and driveway parking areas are maintained as existing.

Neighbouring amenity

Local Plan policy and design guidance also seeks to protect existing residential occupiers from inappropriate development. Issues to consider are the impact of a development proposal upon neighbouring properties by way of overshadowing, loss of light, overbearing impact, overlooking, loss of privacy and general noise and disturbance.

The architects have assessed the proposal against the above-mentioned policy in terms of the impact on neighbouring residential properties with specific regard to the key criteria measures. Having regard to the scale and siting of the development proposals, it is not considered that a significant loss of amenity with particular regard to light, outlook, prospect or privacy would arise.

Impact on Trees

Local Plan policy suggests that new developments should protect and conserve trees important to the amenity of the area; ample space should also be provided for the future growth of these trees. Any loss or harm to such trees in some circumstances be mitigated by replanting but should always be justified by the applicant.

In this case there are no trees on site that will be impacted by the development

Flood:

The site falls within Flood Zone 1 so no FRA is required.

Bats and Biodiversity & the impact on protected species:

Policies of the Local Plan sets out that development in the Borough that will conserve and where possible restore and/or enhance, biodiversity will be permitted.

The application property does not fall within a designated SPA, SAC, SNCI or SSSI. It is not within 200m of ancient woodland or water, and is not an agricultural building or barn.



Site investigations do not identify the presence of bats on site or opportunities for roosting sites given the nature and construction of those elements of the property being affected. The site of the proposed addition is over the existing hard surfaces and the fact that no trees are affected is noteworthy.

Given the location and scale of the proposed works upon existing hard surfaced residential garden areas it is not considered that the development proposed would be likely to have any adverse biodiversity impact.

Sustainability:

Materials used for the extensions will be primarily selected to best suit and complement the existing dwelling.

That said the new work will also seek to exceed the standard of thermal and energy efficiency performance presently required by building regulations.

Appropriately environmentally friendly insulation will be used and opportunities for thermally efficient glazing and solar gain will be utilised wherever possible.

This will maximise thermal performance, air tightness and energy usage and the new rooms will incorporate energy efficient appliances.

Water consumption will be minimised by fitting dual flush toilets and aerating taps to any new rooms and water for toilets.

Other planning benefits

The proposed extension would provide benefits of both an environmental, social and economic nature.

From a social perspective, this would be through the creation of an increase in accommodation and in the flexibility of use of this particular housing stock.

From an economic perspective, the construction of the extensions would provide employment opportunities for local tradespeople.

From an environmental perspective the proposals enhances the visual appearance and sustainability of the existing home.



Conclusion;

The context of the application site and the surrounding area has been carefully considered and fully taken into account by the architects in designing the application proposals.

The Government's NPPF states that planning should always seek to secure high quality design and avoid conflict between the character and appearance of an area and the identifiable need to improve the appearance and functionality of the existing property.

This guidance which looks for planning decisions to address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment should ensure that sustainable development is permitted where proposals respond to local character and history, (are visually attractive as a result of good architecture) and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials.

The proposal also addresses directly the importance of securing the property in its optimum viable use as a flexible family home and to improve its related functionality and sustainability credentials.

This particular proposal presents a noteworthy uplift of an existing residence that presently fails to maximise opportunities presented by its attendant plot.

The new design integrates elements of the existing house into new energy efficient improvements that introduce positive enhancements both to the appearance of the property and the way it functions and meets future expectations.

The proposal will not materially damage the prevailing character of this established residential area nor the quality and character of views within it.

The proposal is of a high quality design, finish and materials and is of a size, scale and arrangement that is appropriate to the host building commensurate with its plot size and compliant with the prevailing policy.

For all of these reasons we look forward to the Local Planning Authorities support for these proposals.