



PROPOSED SINGLE STOREY SIDE EXTENSION AT

ROWAN TREE COTTAGE, CRAZIES HILL

PLANNING STATEMENT

AM2 Planning
37 Ridgeway Wargrave Reading RG10 8AS
07786 080005

CONTENTS:

Page No:

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	SITE DESCRIPTION	2
3.	PROPOSED WORKS	5
4.	ASSESSMENT AGAINST RELEVANT DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF HERITAGE ASSET	8
5.	CONCLUSION	13

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for a proposed single storey side extension to accommodate a utility room at Rowan Tree Cottage, a detached two storey house in Crazies Hill.
- 1.2 In addition to this Statement, the application consists of existing and proposed drawings, relevant completed forms and a Heritage Statement.

2. Site Description

2.1 The application site lies centrally within a cluster of dwellings, fronting the Crazies Hill highway. It forms one of a variety of large detached properties on this stretch of Crazies Hill. A number of these are set notably back from the highway, largely screened by mature planting. The front elevation of Rowan Tree Cottage is however easily apparent in the streetscene, set back only 3m from the highway with a mid-level hedgerow and picket fence fronting the site.

2.2 The house itself is a two-storey detached dwelling with hipped roof and previously extended two storey addition to the rear. A single storey detached, pitched roof, gable ended garage, sits to the north of the dwelling, set back several metres from the front of the dwelling, allowing a car to park off road in front of it. The front part of the house, with white painted brick/stone elevations, is readily apparent in the street scene, but a combination of established planting and the detached garage means that public views of the rear part of the house are obscured from the highway. The house is served by a garden directly to its west and south, ensuring that a notable gap is maintained from the neighbouring property to the south, Plowmans.

2.3 The site lies within the Crazies Hill Area of Special Character (AoSC). The Council's Historic Environment Topic Paper, used as evidence in preparing the Local Plan, describes the area as follows;

'The Crazies Hill Area of Special Character is situated within the parish of Wargrave within the Green Belt. The area is characterised by its linear layout, with built form concentrated along the primary road (Crazies Hill) including 5 Grade II Listed Buildings. The area is characterised by two-storey detached buildings with brick/timber elevations and clay tile or thatched roofs. The streetscape of the primary road that serves the area is characterised by high boundary hedges and mature trees. An important feature is the narrow and winding nature of the road.'

2.4 Rowan Tree Cottage does lie on the primary road but is not one of the listed buildings identified. It is however identified as an *'undesigned heritage asset that makes a positive contribution to the AoSC'* in the Council's Topic Paper. The accompanying Heritage Statement addresses the impact of the proposal upon the various heritage assets.

- 2.5 A private access way runs directly to the north of the application site, serving a couple of detached properties to the rear of the application site at a lower ground level.
- 2.6 Photos below show Rowan Tree Cottage in views from Crazies Hill.



Photo 1: Taken on Crazies Hill from directly NE of the property



Photo 2: Taken on Crazies Hill from directly SE of the property



Photo 3: Taken on Crazies Hill from N of property, opposite Village Hall

3. Planning History

- 3.1 The Council have advised that there are two previous planning applications associated with the site, both of which were approved in the mid 90's.
- 3.2 In 1993, an application was approved for a two-storey rear extension under reference 41172. This was subsequently built on site and accommodates a lounge on the ground floor and bedroom above. The architect has calculated that the volume of the erected two storey extension is 107 cu m, and it reflects the hipped roof design of the original dwelling.
- 3.3 In 1995 planning permission was granted under reference 44759 to replace a fence with a wall at the property.

4. Proposed Works

- 4.1 The single storey extension will be introduced to the rear part of the northern (side) elevation of the house. It will be introduced to an existing gap between the house and the detached garage and will result in a 1m gap being retained between the extended dwelling and the garage, allowing access through to the rear garden.
- 4.2 The extension is being introduced to accommodate a utility room. This will enable the re-location of washing machine / tumble dryer / boiler amongst other things, that are currently sited in family living areas. It will also allow an entry to the house that doesn't lead straight into living areas, and hence appropriate for taking off muddy boots etc. The extension will therefore improve the living environment for the residents.
- 4.3 The materials and design form are proposed in order that the extension appears consistent with the original dwelling and does not appear overly prominent in either public or private views of the property.
- 4.4 The side extension will be set back over 4m from the front building line of the house, at a similar set back to the existing garage. As a result, the extension will not be visible at all when approaching on Crazies Hill from the south (see photo 1 above). It will be apparent when directly to the NE of the property (see photo 2), but as one moves further north, a combination of established planting and the existing garage will largely screen any public views of the extension (see photo 3).
- 4.5 The extension will be 1.8m wide when viewed from the front of the property, and have a depth of just over 6m, not going quite as deep as the established two storey rear extension. A hipped roof will be introduced, as is present on the main roof, and that of the previous extension. The roof will be pitched at the same angle as those already in place. The new roof will reach a maximum height of 3.5m when viewed from the front, which is notably lower than the adjacent garage roof.
- 4.6 With regards materials, the walls will be white painted bricks, as currently exists. The roof will consist of blue/black slates and terracotta hip tiles, as are already present on the main and extended roof. Windows and doors will be green painted

timber to match the existing, and the fascias, soffits and barge boards will similarly be black stained timber to match the existing.

- 4.7 The plans also illustrate the introduction of new planting to the front of the extension, which will further soften the appearance of it, when it is visible from public viewpoints.

5. Assessment against relevant Development Plan Policy and Material Considerations

5.1 The application needs to be determined in accordance with relevant development plan policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the Development Plan is made up of the Wokingham Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Delivery DPD (2014).

5.2 A Local Plan Update is currently underway, with a Submission Plan now subject to Stage 2 Hearing Sessions (scheduled March - June 2026). As a result, the emerging Plan is comparatively advanced, and its contents can be given some weight as a material consideration subject to the level of debate relating to them. The Council's Design Guide and the National Planning Policy Framework are further material considerations to take account of.

Development Plan Policy

5.3 Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy sets out the general principles for development, including requirements that proposals;

a) Are of an appropriate scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users including open spaces or occupiers and their quality of life; and

c) Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.

5.4 With regards the heritage considerations referenced in Policy CP3 (c) above, the most relevant policies of the development plan are Policy TB24 and TB26 of the Council's Managing Development Delivery Document (2014) which relates specifically to Heritage Assets and Areas of Special Character. Policy TB24 advises that the Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of such assets and their settings by;

'2a. Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of

the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.'

- 5.5 Policy TB26 advises that permission will only be granted for proposals affecting Areas of Special Character, *'where they demonstrate that they retain and enhance the traditional, historical, local and special character of the building or area and its setting'*.
- 5.6 The accompanying Heritage Statement identifies the relevant heritage assets in this case, most notably the Area of Special Character (AoSC), but also including nearby Listed Buildings and undesignated assets of local importance. The Heritage Statement explains why the qualities of the AoSC will not be harmed by the proposed development, and that the significance of it, and other relevant heritage assets, will be conserved. As a result, the proposal is shown to adhere with the requirements of Policy TB24 and TB26 of the MDD DPD.
- 5.7 With regards the issues of scale, mass, character, materials and height referred to at policy CP3 (a), the extension has been designed to reflect and be considerate of the host dwelling. The materials will match those of the existing, as will the hipped roof design. The set back nature of the extension will result in it being largely screened from public view by the house itself and detached garage on site. The single storey nature of the extension, being lower than the adjacent garage will also ensure that even when it is visible it will appear subservient to the main house, albeit in keeping with it. As a result, the overall character of the house will not be affected and it will continue to contribute positively to the streetscene and local built environment.
- 5.8 Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy relates to proposals outside of development limits, such as this, advising that residential extensions should not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building. Policy CP12 relates to the Green Belt, which the application site lies within. It advises that permission will not be granted for 'inappropriate development'. The NPPF advises (at paragraph 154c) that extensions will not be inappropriate development provided that they do not result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

- 5.9 In this case the volume of the original building was 372 cu m. The previous two storey extension from the 90s added 107 cu m, and the currently proposed single storey extension will add a further 35 cu m. As a result, the total additional volume of the two extensions combined is 142 cu m. This equates to a 38% increase beyond the size of the original building.
- 5.10 There is no black and white definition of precisely what scale of increase is inappropriate or disproportionate. However, it is common for Council's to apply a rule of thumb based upon up to a 40% or 50% increase being acceptable. The proposed increase of 38% beyond the original adheres with such a rule of thumb. It is however considered helpful to assess the underlying intentions of the associated policy when looking at such increases.
- 5.11 Policy CP11 resists the 'inappropriate' increase of residential extensions *'in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment'*.
- 5.12 There can be no doubt that the proposed residential extension in this case will have no impact whatsoever on the separate identity of Crazies Hill and other settlements. The proposal will hardly be visible from public or private views! With regards the quality of the environment, this Statement and the accompanying Heritage Statement have explained why the design and scale of the extension is appropriate and will conserve the quality of the immediate and wider environment. It is clear that the proposed extension satisfies the underlying requirements of, and justification for, Policy CP11. When considered alongside the volume increase of 38%, this adds further to the appropriateness of the scheme.
- 5.13 The proposed extension has therefore been shown to be in accordance with the most relevant development plan policies, and unless material considerations indicate otherwise, should be approved accordingly.

Material Considerations

- 5.14 The Council issued the Borough Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document in 2012. It includes guidance on household extensions at section 4.11. Specific guidance is provided for side extensions, including the comment that *'the*

primary considerations are impact upon neighbourhood and upon street scene and local character’.

- 5.15 This and the accompanying Heritage Statement have explained why the proposed extension will have an entirely appropriate impact upon the neighbourhood and character of the area, the significance of which is heightened given the identified AoSC.
- 5.16 The Design Guide refers to the importance of side extensions generally not projecting forward of the building line, extensions generally being subservient to the form and scale of the original, roof forms being taken from the main building, and materials being selected to match those of the existing. The proposed extension adheres with all such guidance and is considered to receive support from the Council’s Design Guide.
- 5.17 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has already been referred to above with regards to the definition of inappropriate development regarding proposed development in the Green Belt. It is also helpful to consider the NPPF’s guidance on Green Belt matters more widely. Paragraph 142 refers to the essential characteristics of Green Belt being their openness and permanence. In this instance, the proposed extension will be introduced to an area between a garage and the house, that cannot realistically be described as an ‘open’ area. The proposal will have no adverse impact upon the level of openness experienced in this part of the Green Belt.
- 5.18 In addition to the proposal not representing a disproportionate increase beyond the original, it will sustain the openness of the area, and as a result adheres with the guiding principles relating to development in the Green Belt, as set out in the NPPF.
- 5.19 The final material consideration which warrants attention is the emerging Local Plan, in the form of the Proposed Submission Plan. The Proposed Submission Plan includes reference to development in the Green Belt at Policy SS6. It repeats the content of the NPPF as already referred to, requiring that inappropriate development is resisted, and extensions should not result in disproportionate additions over the original. It also adds reference (at 5c) to extensions not having an adverse impact on the character of the area or

openness of the Green Belt. For reasons already explained, the proposed extension satisfies all such requirements.

- 5.20 Policy DH5 of the Submission Plan refers to the historic environment. Reference is made to the conservation of heritage assets, and the approach to be taken subject to the level of harm caused by development proposals upon them. As explained in detail in the accompanying Heritage Statement, the proposed extension in this instance will conserve all heritage assets, and as a result adheres with the requirements of Policy DH5.
- 5.21 Whilst the weight to be afforded to the above Submission Plan policies remains limited until the Inspectors report is received, it is apparent that the proposed extension adheres with the requirements of such policies.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This Statement has described the proposed extension and explained why it will be an entirely appropriate addition to the existing property at Rowan Tree Cottage.
- 6.2 The proposal has been assessed against relevant development plan policies relating to household extensions in the Green Belt, and allowing for the site's location in the Crazies Hill Area of Special Character. It has been shown that the proposed extension is in accordance with and supported by the relevant development plan policies, and as a result should be approved unless material considerations suggest otherwise.
- 6.3 In this case the relevant material considerations are the Council's Design Guide, the NPPF and the Council's emerging Local Plan. It has been shown that all such material considerations provide further support for the application.
- 6.4 It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted for the proposed single storey side extension. If Officers have any queries or concerns it is requested that the Applicant's Agent be contacted in order that such matters can be addressed.