

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Address: 78a Eastheath Avenue, Wokingham
Proposal: Erection of a part single, part two storey side extension to the dwelling, incorporating a new front entrance porch, together with associated alterations to the existing fenestration.
Local Planning Authority: Wokingham Borough Council

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a householder planning application for the erection of a part single, part two storey side extension at 78a Eastheath Avenue, Wokingham. The extension incorporates a new front entrance porch together with associated alterations to the fenestration of the existing dwelling.

The statement sets out the design rationale for the proposals, explains how they respond to the character of the site and its surroundings, and addresses relevant planning policies. It also specifically addresses the position of the proposed two storey element in relation to the site boundary, which is a matter of planning policy relevance.

2. Site and Context

2.1. Site Description

The application site relates to a residential dwelling situated at 78a Eastheath Avenue, Wokingham. The property occupies a corner plot, with the principal frontage along Eastheath Avenue and a secondary frontage (side elevation) running parallel to Reeves Way. This corner plot position is a defining characteristic of the site and is central to understanding the planning merits of the proposed development.

The surrounding area is an established residential neighbourhood typical of the Wokingham urban area, characterised by a mix of semi-detached and detached dwellings with a variety of plot sizes and house types.

2.2. Existing Dwelling

The existing property is a semi-detached residential dwelling with off-street parking provision at the front of the plot accommodating two vehicles, and a further parking space to the rear. The dwelling currently presents a modest and unremarkable entrance frontage which the proposals seek to improve.

3. The Proposed Development

3.1. Description of Works

The proposed development comprises a part single, part two storey side extension to the flank elevation of the dwelling, incorporating a new front entrance porch and associated alterations to the existing fenestration. At first floor, the extension and associated reconfiguration works provide an additional bedroom. At ground floor, the works address the existing fully open plan layout by introducing a separate kitchen, a new entrance hallway, a downstairs WC and an open plan dining and living space to the rear of the plan.

3.2. Design Approach

The proposed extension has been designed to be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the wider street scene. External materials throughout will match those of the existing dwelling, including brickwork, roof tiles and window surrounds, ensuring the extension reads as a coherent and integrated addition rather than an incongruous appendage.

The two storey element is set back from the principal front wall of the dwelling by over one metre so that it remains clearly subservient to the main building when viewed from both Eastheath Avenue and Reeves Way. The roof pitch and ridge height are designed to complement the existing dwelling, maintaining visual continuity across the enlarged building. Window openings reflect the size, proportion and positioning of existing fenestration, sustaining a consistent and settled character. The front entrance porch provides a more defined and welcoming arrival point, giving the property an improved street presence and enhancing its kerb appeal.

4. Planning Policy Considerations

4.1. National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework requires that planning decisions promote good design and should approve development that improves the character and quality of an area. The proposals represent a modest and well-designed addition to a residential property that is in keeping with the established character of the surrounding area.

4.2. Wokingham Borough Council Local Policy

The Borough Design Guide SPD (2012), adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document and a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, sets out guidance for extensions to residential dwellings. Policy considerations relevant to the proposals are addressed below.

4.3. Two Storey Side Extension and the 1 Metre Boundary Setback

The Council's supplementary planning guidance indicates that to avoid a terracing effect, two storey side extensions should normally retain a gap of at least 1 metre between the extended property and the boundary of the curtilage. The rationale for this guidance is to prevent regular pairs of semi-

detached or detached properties from being made to appear as terraces, which would be harmful to the character of the street scene.

In this case, the application site is situated on a corner plot. The proposed two storey side extension runs parallel to Reeves Way, and the red line boundary along this elevation adjoins a public highway, not a neighbouring residential property. There is therefore no risk of a terracing effect arising from the proposals. The purpose of the 1 metre setback guidance, which is to preserve visual separation between dwellings and prevent the appearance of a terraced row, simply does not apply in this context.

As the Council's own supplementary planning guidance acknowledges, individual cases do not always fit easily into a particular category, and the guidance is intended as an aid to good design rather than a rigid rule. Where proposals do not meet the standard guidelines, a brief justification should be provided, which this statement does.

The guidance also recognises that corner plot properties require specific consideration, noting that side extensions on corner properties can be visible from the street and should be carefully designed. The proposals have been designed with this in mind, with the extension running parallel to Reeves Way and presenting a well-composed elevation to the public highway.

In summary, the proposed two storey element built to the boundary is fully justified by the specific circumstances of this site. The boundary in question adjoins a public highway rather than an adjacent residential property, and there is no neighbouring dwelling on this side of the site with which the extension could create any terracing effect. The road running parallel to the new elevation ensures that the extended property will remain visually distinct and clearly separated from other development. The proposals do not prejudice the amenity, outlook, daylight or privacy of any adjoining occupier.

4.4. Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed extension is located to the side of the dwelling, with the two storey element adjacent to the highway boundary. There are no primary habitable room windows proposed in the side elevation facing Reeves Way. The proposals have been designed to ensure that there is no material loss of daylight, sunlight, outlook or privacy to any adjacent residential property.

4.5. Parking and Highways

The Council's guidance requires consideration of whether proposed extensions will result in a loss of car parking spaces. The proposed development does not affect the parking provision at the site. The site currently accommodates two vehicles at the front of the property and one vehicle to the rear, and this level of provision is retained in full. The addition of one bedroom is unlikely to generate a material increase in parking demand beyond that which the site can comfortably accommodate.

4.6. Street scene and Kerb Appeal

The incorporation of the new front entrance porch is a positive addition to the property's frontage. The existing dwelling currently presents a somewhat plain front elevation, and the proposed porch provides a defined and attractive entrance feature, improving the visual appearance of the property

when viewed from Eastheath Avenue. This is consistent with the aim of the Borough Design Guide to improve the character and quality of the built environment.

5. Access

The proposals do not alter the existing vehicular access arrangements to the site. Pedestrian access to the dwelling will be improved through the provision of the new front entrance porch, which provides a more welcoming and clearly defined arrival point. No changes are proposed to the existing driveway or to the off-street parking layout.

6. Conclusion

The proposed part single, part two storey side extension with new front entrance porch at 78a Eastheath Avenue represents a well-considered and proportionate addition to the existing dwelling. The extension has been designed to match the materials and character of the host property and provides an improved frontage through the addition of the new porch. An additional bedroom is created at first floor level, and the existing off-street parking provision is retained in full.

The site occupies a corner plot and the two storey element runs parallel to a public highway, meaning there is no risk of a terracing effect and the rationale for the 1 metre boundary setback guidance does not apply in this instance. The proposals do not prejudice the amenity, privacy or daylight of any neighbouring residential occupier and are consistent with the relevant policies of the Wokingham Borough Council Borough Design Guide SPD and with the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is respectfully submitted that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development.