



## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2024 by E Street BSc (Hons)

**Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 16 January 2025**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/24/3347557**

**3 Chagford Road, Reading RG2 8AY**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr L Sadowska against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
  - The application Ref is 240320.
  - The development proposed is described as "retrospective application for single storey rear extension."
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

### Preliminary Matters

3. The description of development has been taken from the application form. However, the submitted plans show both a garden room and a side extension which are attached in different positions to a previously approved rear extension. Whilst the description of development does not specifically detail the elements, I am satisfied that both parties have considered all relevant parts of the development, and they can be assessed as part of this appeal.
4. Prior to the issuing of this decision, a revised 2024 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. Having reviewed the changes, I am satisfied that proceeding without further consultation with the main parties would not prejudice their respective cases since the substance thereof do not have an effect in regard to the main issues. I have proceeded with reference to the new version of the Framework in this decision.

### Main Issue

5. The main issues are the effect of the scheme on a) the character and appearance of the area; and b) the living conditions of the occupiers of Nos 18 and 20 Merton Road North in terms of outlook and No 100 Chagford Road in terms of light.

## **Reasons for the Recommendation**

### *Character and Appearance*

6. The appeal site is one half of a pair of semi-detached two storey dwellings. It, like others, has been extended in an area that also includes some terraces. The majority of local extensions are subservient in their scale and land take to their relatively modern but modest host, resulting in an obviousness and primacy to the original buildings and an overall consistency which both contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.
7. There are some works to the house that were authorised by a previous planning permission. A further extension has been tacked on, taking the rearward projection of the building to its own rear boundary. Together with the previous extensions, the appeal scheme in this respect has all but obscured the rear elevation of the building and, despite it being single storey, does dominate the host by virtue of its excessive scale and land take. Its failure to be acceptably subservient detrimentally affects the pleasant consistency of the area and thus is harmful to its character and appearance.
8. In terms of the single storey element to the side of the approved extension which fills in a section between it and the shared boundary with No 100 Chagford Road, it does not significantly change the approved situation. It is a small area of land, and the height of the additional extension matches that of the approved works. That said, and for the above reasons when considered with the additional rearward projection, it does contribute to the excessive substance of combined extensions to the rear, adding to the harm that would be caused by their total scale and land take.
9. I appreciate that the works are to the rear and thus somewhat screened from public view, but it is highly visible from the building's garden, some neighbours and can be glimpsed from the street due to gaps between pairs and groups of surrounding buildings. Its siting is not therefore such that the scheme could be considered acceptable. The scheme therefore conflicts with Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) 2019, the Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 2021 and Chapter 12 of the Framework which together seek to ensure that development proposals are of a high-quality design and standard.

### *Living Conditions*

10. The garden room is close to three meters in height and abuts the side boundary of both number 18 and 20 Merton Road North (No 18 and 20). The garden room in combination with the approved elements of the scheme results in a blank elevation along the end of the boundary of No 18 and 20. Whilst the views of the blank elevation are far from ideal, the elevation is a substantial distance from the dwellings and the integrity of the garden space would be retained. As a result, it does not result in an overbearing impact or detrimental sense of enclosure that negatively impacts the outlook for occupiers.
11. The single storey rear extension which attaches to the side of the existing rear extension closes the gap between the approved extension and the boundary fence. Due to the existing approved built form, limited width increase of extension and the modest height, the impact of the additional built form on the occupiers is minimal. In addition, the existing boundary treatment already

forms a sense of enclosure to No 100, therefore, the modest additional increase would not be so significant to result in detrimental loss of light. Essentially, the existing situation would not be made materially different to the point that unacceptable additional harm might arise. Therefore, the proposal does not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of No 100.

12. With this and the above in mind, the appeal scheme complies with Policy CC8 of the RBLP which amongst other things seeks to ensure that living conditions of properties are protected.

### **Other Matters**

13. A garden room may be permissible by Class E of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 should it be detached from the property. However, it is not for me as part of this appeal to determine whether this would be the case and in any event the proposal is not detached. Express planning permission for the works is therefore required and falls to be assessed here. In addition, I have not been presented with evidence of said alternate proposal which allows me to consider whether the scheme would be sufficiently comparable to the appeal proposal. Such that I could ascribe more than limited weight to it as a fallback position.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

14. The proposed development would not comply with the development plan, specifically in regard to the first main issue. I have found in the appellant's on the second, but this would be a lack of harm and thus neutral in any balance. I have been given no compelling reason, taking into account other material considerations advanced, to deviate from the development plan. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

*E Street*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

### **Inspector's Decision**

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

*John Morrison*

INSPECTOR