

Application Ref: 21/01418/HHFUL

Proposal: Proposed two storey side and front and single storey rear extensions and garage

Site: 54 Tollgate, Bretton, Peterborough, PE3 9XA
Applicant: Mr G Singh

Agent: Mr Chris Dawson
 Hereward Services Limited

Referred by: Councillor Scott Warren
Reason: Proposal does not go against planning policy LP16

Site visit: 04.11.2021

Case officer: Mrs Shaheeda Montgomery
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Recommendation: **REFUSE**

1 Description of the site and surroundings and Summary of the proposal

Site and Surrounding Area

The application comprises a two storey detached residential dwelling located on a visually prominent corner plot at the junction of Tollgate (a main residential road off Bretton Way) with School Close. The dwelling is located set back from the highway, benefitting from an enclosed rear garden and a detached garage sited along the eastward rear boundary. 3no. parking spaces are provided on-site: one within an existing detached single storey garage to the rear; one on a hard surfaced driveway to the front of this garage; and a further on a hard surfaced area to the front of the dwelling.

To School Close is a green verge open to the highway with a brick wall enclosing the rear garden sited along the existing building line of the developments on School Close. There is a vehicular access gate serving a detached garage within the rear garden situated within this enclosing wall with hard surfaced area provided between the fence and the highway edge providing an extra on-site parking space, in addition to one on-site space available to the front of the dwellinghouse.

Sacred Heart RC Primary School is located approximately 70m to the north-east of the site and a foot and cycle path running north-south is sited some 20m from the eastern boundary of the site, crossing School Close.

The immediate locality surrounding the application site is characterised by mostly detached dwellings of similar scale and design with ample set back distance from the footway, green verges and soft landscaping which give the setting and surrounding a general outlook of space and openness.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the following elements:

- A rear extension sited 0.5m from the northward boundary, with dimensions 3.8m wide x 8.4m deep and a flat roof with total height of 2.89m topped with a lantern rooflight, to extend the existing kitchen into the rear garden;

- A two storey side/front extension of dimensions 2.6m wide x 2m deep with a flat roof to accommodate a new WC and Lobby, with glazed entrance door and a window to front elevation on the ground floor, and provide additional floor space to existing bedroom on the first floor with a window above the proposed WC;
- A two storey side extension with staggered side elevation, with a maximum width of 3.25m and 6.45m depth which would accommodate a store room and an additional living room on ground floor and create additional floor area to existing bedrooms as well as an en-suite bathroom. The roof apex would be of the same height as the existing dwelling and the rear dormer would be extended on the east elevation; and
- A 600mm high brick wall with an inward opening gate along the southward boundary hard up to the back edge of the footway running along School Close.

All external finishing materials are to match the existing dwelling.

Background

It should be noted that the proposal represents an amendment to development recently refused planning permission (June 2021) under application reference 21/00137/HHFUL. This previous application was refused for the following reason:

R1- Character refusal.

The proposal, by virtue of its scale and siting, would unacceptably impact upon the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The proposal would lead to an awkward and contrived appearance, wholly at odds with the existing building lines of the streetscene through the loss of space and openness of the green verge along School Close. Due to its prominent location, the proposal would be readily visible and would appear unduly dominant and at odds with the established pattern of the built form of the streetscene. This would result in unacceptable harm to the character, appearance and visual amenity of the surrounding area, and is therefore contrary to Policy LP16 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

The differences between this earlier refused scheme and the current proposal are as follows:

- The current proposal has a staggered side extension with maximum width of 3.25m (2.7m to front). The earlier application consisted of side extension of 2.6m width)
- The current proposal is for an increase in footprint of 55.3 sq.m compared to 40.9 sq.m in the earlier scheme from June 2021.

2 Planning History

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Date
21/00137/HHFUL	Proposed 2 storey side and front and single storey rear extensions and conversion of garage to study	Refused	21/06/2021

3 Planning Policy

Decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan policies below, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Peterborough Local Plan 2016 to 2036 (2019)

LP13 - Transport

LP13a) New development should ensure that appropriate provision is made for the transport needs that it will create including reducing the need to travel by car, prioritisation of bus use, improved

walking and cycling routes and facilities.

LP13b) The Transport Implications of Development- Permission will only be granted where appropriate provision has been made for safe access for all user groups and subject to appropriate mitigation.

LP13c) Parking Standards- permission will only be granted if appropriate parking provision for all modes of transport is made in accordance with standards.

LP13d) City Centre- All proposal must demonstrate that careful consideration has been given to prioritising pedestrian access, to improving access for those with mobility issues, to encouraging cyclists and to reducing the need for vehicles to access the area.

LP16 - Urban Design and the Public Realm

Development proposals would contribute positively to the character and distinctiveness of the area. They should make effective and efficient use of land and buildings, be durable and flexible, use appropriate high quality materials, maximise pedestrian permeability and legibility, improve the public realm, address vulnerability to crime, and be accessible to all.

LP17 - Amenity Provision

LP17a) Part A Amenity of Existing Occupiers- Permission will not be granted for development which would result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, public and/or private green space or natural daylight; be overbearing or cause noise or other disturbance, odour or other pollution; fail to minimise opportunities for crime and disorder.

LP17b) Part B Amenity of Future Occupiers- Proposals for new residential development should be designed and located to ensure that they provide for the needs of the future residents.

4 Consultations/Representations

Bretton Parish Council

No comments received.

PCC Peterborough Highways Services

Comments are awaited from the Local Highway Authority and will be provided to Members within the Briefing Update Report.

Local Residents/Interested Parties

Initial consultations: 8

Total number of responses: 2

Total number of objections: 1

Total number in support: 1

One letter of objection was received from an adjacent neighbour (No.53 Tollgate) who have raised the following concerns:

- Its large increase in size and dominant situation on the corner plot would make it an overbearing eyesore, out of character and unacceptably awkward and detrimental to the streetscene around it.
- Compared to the plans in the application 21/00137/HHFUL which was rejected, there is only a minute difference between the two plans on the frontal/side elevations which face the road on the corner plot. The difference just being the small connection, or passageway, between the proposed house extension and the garage. The loss of the small utility and toilet behind the garage would not make any real difference to the frontal elevation or the general structure of the house.
- As the possible changing of use of the garage into living accommodation at a later date, e.g. into a study as in the original application would not require any planning permission the assumption that this would invariably happen must be borne in mind.

Councillor Warren has expressed his support for the proposal, referring it to Committee on the basis that he does not consider that it is contrary to policy LP16 of the adopted Local Plan.

5 Assessment of the planning issues

The main considerations are:

- Design and impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area
- Neighbour amenity
- Future occupier amenity
- Highway safety and parking provision

a) Design and impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area

The streetscene is characterised by developments of similar proportions and design features with regular, open, green spaces to break up and set back the built form from the public highway creating a sense of openness. The location of the application site on a prominent corner plot along the main feeder route from Bretton Way gives this particular site visual significance and Officers note that any development that would bring the built mass closer to School Close would alter the streetscene and impact on the surrounding area and would have to be carefully considered.

The proposed side extension towards School Close would result in a bulky and awkward juxtaposition of form which would appear incongruent and out of place against the prevailing design features and proportions of the surrounding locality. The form of development proposed would break the established building line along School Close to the east, sitting forward of this and eroding the breathing space which exists between the highway and the building.

This would be exacerbated by the proposal to reposition the boundary wall. It is proposed to construct a 600mm brickwork boundary wall and gate sited along the footway edge which would introduce a further alien feature in the streetscene which is not characterised by physical boundary treatment coming hard up to the highway or footway edge. Whilst it is noted that the boundary wall proposed would be low, it would still erode the verge which is a characteristic element of the streetscene and maintains the set back of development along School Close.

In this instance, the bringing of development closer to the highway would result in an unduly bulky and obtrusive appearance which wholly fails to respect the established built form and character of the area. The proposal would erode an established and key verdant area within the locality, resulting in a hard and stark appearance within the streetscene to the overall detriment of the visual amenity of the area.

In addition, Officers note that the roof height of the proposed side extension is set at the same level as the host dwelling which would not appear subservient to the existing built form and adds to the visually dominant proportions of the overall proposed scheme.

Turning to the front extension, the proposal would introduce a flat roofed two storey element. Whilst it is noted that flat roof dormer windows are present within the streetscene, there are no other examples of two storey flat roofed developments which are not considered to be a positive design element. Such an extension would appear awkward and incongruous within the streetscape, and exacerbate the harm arising from the two storey side extension.

In light of the above, the resulting scheme would appear visually dominant and out of place in its setting and surrounding area, and would not be considered respectful of the local patterns of development and building form. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would not be in compliance with Policy LP16 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

b) Neighbour amenity

One letter of objection was received from an adjacent neighbour (No.53 Tollgate to the north) raising concerns regarding the size and scale of the proposed scheme, and its impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Officers have addressed these in the section above.

Looking due north at No.53 Tollgate, Officers note that the proposed rear extension would result in development only 0.5 metres from the shared boundary between the two properties. However, the single storey nature of the proposed kitchen extension with a flat roof of 2.6m (2.8m including the roof lantern) would be close to what would be achieved within the limits of permitted development. Further relief could be provided with an increase in the proposed gap between the proposed flank wall and the northward boundary, however, in this instance it is observed that this would provide only marginal effect and would not make a material change on the level of impact experienced by this northward neighbour.

No.55 Tollgate is the adjacent neighbour located due east (to the rear) of the application site. It is considered that the siting of the proposed rear extension, between the existing rear wall of the host dwelling and the detached garage along the eastward boundary, combined with the single storey nature of this element, would ensure that no undue level of overbearing impact on No.55 would occur. In addition, no issue of overshadowing would likely result.

The two storey side extension would project the southward flank wall of the host dwelling out towards the highway, bringing it forward of the principal elevation of No.55. However, it is noted that the separation distance between the host dwelling and No.55 Tollgate, combined with the orientation of the proposal to this neighbour, would ensure that the proposal would not result in overshadowing impact on this rear adjacent neighbour. With regards to overlooking, the proposal would introduce further primary habitable windows at first floor level into the rear facing elevation, however this would not substantially increase or worsen the impact that already results to No.55 and any new windows would be at such an angle that only oblique views into neighbouring windows could be achieved.

Officers note that the proposal would result in the application site boundary extending from its current position to along the back edge of the footway which would result in additional length of boundary treatment with No.55. Whilst no details of the fencing are proposed, it is not considered that undue harm would arise to neighbour amenity from this.

Given the above it is considered that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring occupants and is therefore in compliance with Policy LP17 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

c) Future occupier amenity

At present, the rear garden serving the application site is fully enclosed and private. The proposal seeks to reposition the boundary wall along School Close and replace it with a dwarf wall of 600mm in height. This would result in the rear garden area no longer being secure or private, to the detriment of occupier's amenity.

Nonetheless, a condition could readily be imposed requiring that a more substantial and taller fence/boundary treatment be erected in a position which does not pose a highway safety danger and which ensures privacy of the garden. Accordingly, the proposal would maintain the amenities of occupiers of the dwelling, in accordance with Policy LP17 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

d) Highway safety and parking provision

At present, the existing dwelling benefits from 3no. on-site parking spaces available on the hard surfaced areas to the front and rear of the site (off Tollgate and School Close respectively), and within a detached single garage within the rear garden. Whilst the garage does not conform to the size standards now sought by the Local Plan, it is nonetheless of a size which is considered usable as a parking space. Accordingly, this existing parking provision accords with the Council's adopted minimum parking standards for the size of dwelling.

The proposal seeks to reposition the garden boundary wall which would result in the enclosing of the existing hard surfaced driveway to the rear. However, gated access would be maintained and a condition could readily be imposed requiring that the parking space be retained in perpetuity. As such, this would not be lost. In terms of visibility of oncoming pedestrians, the boundary wall is proposed at 600mm in height which would maintain existing pedestrian visibility and not pose an undue safety danger.

Parking provision to the front would be unaltered by the proposal. Whilst 2no. spaces are shown within this area on the submitted drawings, Officers consider that only one space is usable. Notwithstanding this, 2no. parking spaces are required to be provided on-site to meet the needs of the resultant dwelling and this can be achieved. The proposal would therefore not pose a highway safety danger in this respect.

Concern has been raised in the letter of objection received regarding the possible loss of the existing garage in future. Officers note this concern however 2no. parking spaces elsewhere on-site would be maintained irrespective of the garage, and this level of parking accords with the adopted minimum standards. As such, it would not be reasonable or necessary to restrict the ability to convert the garage.

Although the proposed side extension would bring a two storey mass closer to the highway edge and remove the visual openness of the side along the green verge, it is noted that there is not enough grounds for a refusal based on highway safety concern even though it is noted that the proposal would result in a small degree of degradation of the forward visibility of the junction. Furthermore, Officers note that there is an existing tree and medium sized greenery located to site frontage which would limit pedestrian and driver's sightline turning into School Close from Tollgate.

Whilst comments of the Local Highway Authority (LHA) are awaited, they previously did not object to the siting of the proposal or parking arrangement in regards to application reference 21/00137/HHFUL for the reasons set out above.

With regards to the proposed gates to the rear, these would be located hard up on the footway edge would usually be considered a highway safety concern by the LHA. Notwithstanding Officers concerns regarding design of the proposal, should Members be minded to grant planning permission, a condition requiring this access to be ungated could be secured.

Given the above, it is considered that the proposal would be in compliance with Policy LP13 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

6 Conclusions

The proposal is unacceptable having been assessed in light of all material considerations, including weighing against relevant policies of the development plan and for the specific reasons given below.

7 Recommendation

The Executive Director of Place and Economy recommends that Planning Permission is **REFUSED** for the following reason:

- R 1 The proposal, by virtue of its siting, design and scale, would unacceptably impact upon the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. The proposal would lead to an awkward and contrived appearance, wholly at odds with the existing building lines of the streetscene through the loss of space and openness of the green verge along School Close. Due to its prominent location, the proposal would be readily visible and would appear unduly dominant and at odds with the established pattern of the built form of the streetscene. This would result in unacceptable harm to the character, appearance and visual amenity of the surrounding area, and is therefore contrary to Policy LP16 of the Peterborough Local Plan (2019).

Copies to Councillor: Burbage, Fenner and Scott

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