
APPLICATION NO.	P09/E0056
APPLICATION TYPE	Full
REGISTERED	26 th January 2009
PARISH	Henley-on-Thames
WARD MEMBERS	Mr Terry Buckett Ms Roswitha Myer
APPLICANT	Mr William Phillips
SITE	Spring Cottage
PROPOSALS	Three storey rear extension, two storey front extension with dormer windows to the front and rear
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	477110/181659
OFFICER	Tom Wyatt

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application has been called to Committee at the request of the Ward Member, Cllr Buckett.
- 1.2 The application site (which is shown on the OS extract **attached** as Appendix A) is located off Mill Lane, a narrow lane connecting Reading Road to the River Thames. The site is occupied by one of several detached dwellings fronting or located close to the River, and due to the size of the individual plots and the spaciousness of the built form, the site and its surroundings has a distinctly semi-rural appearance. The site is within Flood Zone 3.
- 1.3 Planning permission was granted in July 2008 for extensions to the property under application P08/E0668, and this current proposal is essentially for amendments to the approved details of this permission.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The application seeks permission for the erection of a three storey rear extension to form a bedroom at second floor level and dining room at first floor. The ground floor would result in the continuation of the basement area, which is not part of the useable accommodation of the dwelling but is in place for flood mitigation purposes. Therefore, the living areas of the property are confined to two floors. The rear extension would be in place of an existing two storey extension (including basement) and would measure approximately 4.5 metres in depth, 4.4 metres in width and 8.5 metres in height where it would sit below the main ridge of the existing house by 0.7 metres. As part of this extension, an existing raised deck area would be extended to match the rear building line of the extension.
- 2.2 A porch area is proposed to the front elevation, which would project from the existing front building line of the property by 2.2 metres and would be 3 metres in width and 6 metres in height, including the basement area. It is also proposed to infill an open covered area to the front elevation and provide two matching dormer windows within the front roof slope.
- 2.3 The proposed development is very similar to the development approved under application P08/E0668 with the main differences outlined below.

1. Replacement of tile hung windowless dormer to side (north east) elevation with a gable. This has been brought about by simply continuing the eaves of the dormer to the eaves line of the main part of the extension.
 2. Increase in depth of the proposed front porch by approximately 0.4 metres.
 3. Realignment of the entrance steps to the main entrance.
- 2.4 Other minor changes include a reduction in the number of windows on the side (north east) elevation facing 'Riverslea' and an additional two windows on the side elevation (south west).
- 2.5 The depth, and height and general design of the main extension to the rear and the porch is unchanged, as are the proposed dormer windows to the front, rear and side (south west) elevations.
- 2.6 A copy of the plans accompanying the application are **attached** as Appendix B, and a copy of the approved plans relating to planning application P08/E0668 are **attached** as Appendix C for comparison purposes. Further information submitted in support of the application, including the Design and Access Statement can be found on the Council's website, www.southoxon.gov.uk
- 3.0 **CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS**
- 3.1 **Henley-on-Thames Town Council** – Objects due to 'bulk, and overintensive development of site. It is also thought to be unneighbourly and will cause a detrimental impact on wildlife and increase flood risk'.
- 3.2 **Henley Society** – Objects as the proposals are excessive in size and unneighbourly.
- 3.3 **Environment Agency** – The EA has stated that they should not have been formally consulted on the application as the development falls within the scope of the EA's Flood Risk Standing Advice.
- 3.4 **Neighbours** – 1 letter of objection received. The main points raised are:
- design and scale out of keeping with the existing dwelling and the surrounding area
 - extension of front building line
 - the proposal would be unneighbourly to Riverslea in relation to loss of light and overlooking
 - reduction in flood storage capacity
 - business use of property
 - possible subsidence due to clay subsoil
 - disturbance to wildlife
- 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**
- 4.1 P08/E0668 - Erection of three storey rear extension and two storey front extension. Planning Permission granted on 28 July 2008.
- 4.2 P07/E1501 - Front, rear & side extensions. Withdrawn prior to determination on 09 January 2008.
- 4.3 P07/E1085 - Front & rear extensions & internal alterations. Withdrawn prior to determination on 25 September 2007.

5.0 **POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

5.1 Adopted Structure Plan 2016 Policies:
-G1, G2, T1, T8, EN1, EN9

5.2 Policies of the Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP):
-G1, G2, G6, EP5, D1, D4, H13, T1, T2

5.3 Government Guidance:
-PPS1, PPS25

5.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance
-South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008 (SODG)

6.0 **PLANNING ISSUES**

6.1 The planning issues that are relevant to this application are:

1. The impact on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area
2. The impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers
3. Flood risk
4. Other material considerations

The Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Site and Surrounding Area

- 6.2 Proposals for extensions to existing dwellings fall to be assessed primarily against Policy H13 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP) and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide (SODG). Proposals need to satisfy several criteria attached to Policy H13, including the need to ensure that the scale and design of the proposal is in keeping with the character and appearance of the dwelling and the surrounding area. Similarly, guidance contained within the SODG seeks to ensure that extensions complement the form and character of the original house. As such, it is usually expected that extensions to dwellings are in keeping with the design of the original property and are of a scale to ensure that they do not overwhelm the property.
- 6.3 The existing property is an attractive red brick property that appears to be Edwardian in origin. It also appears contemporaneous with the adjacent property, Riverslea due to the similarities in the design and size of the two properties. Mill Lane is characterised by loose knit residential development on the edge of the main built up area of Henley. The area has a distinctly semi-rural character and appearance due to the spaciousness of the built form and the proximity to undeveloped countryside. Spring Cottage and Riverslea are complementary to one another in design and scale and this is clearly noticeable in views of these two properties from Mill Lane.
- 6.4 The previous planning permission (P08/E0668) was the third attempt by the applicant to achieve approval for extensions to the property following the withdrawal of two inappropriate earlier schemes. The earlier schemes were considered to be inappropriate due to the size and design of the extensions. However, following discussions with Planning Officers, a simpler and more traditional form of development allowing the main features of the property to be retained was proposed and this scheme was approved.
- 6.5 The differences between the approved details and the current proposals are very minor in the context of the overall scheme. Neither the alterations to the dormer feature on the north east elevation nor the small increase in the depth of the porch and the realignment of the entrance steps represent a significant change to the already approved details.

- 6.6 Key features of the front elevation of the dwelling are the single offset gable and simple extended roofline punctuated by a single dormer window. Crucially, the current and approved proposals retain the front gable intact and this feature would remain the dominant element of the front elevation. In addition the extended roofline would still be retained through the addition of two modestly sized dormer windows. The proposed porch area would extend the building lines of the property forward by 2.2 metres but this feature would remain entirely subservient to the existing front elevation.
- 6.7 As the front extensions would respect the form and appearance of the existing front elevation, the proposals would also ensure that the similarities between the front elevation of Spring Cottage and Riverslea would remain clearly evident. This would be the benefit of the character of the dwelling but also to the benefit of the character and appearance of the street scene and wider area. However, it should be noted that during the summer months, the existing trees on the boundary of the property with Mill Lane reduce the visual prominence of the dwelling in public views from Mill Lane significantly.
- 6.8 The rear extension is essentially of the same height, size, and design as already approved. This part of the dwelling would be largely concealed from views from Mill Lane by the bulk of the main dwelling and that of Riverslea, however, a glimpse of the extension would be possible when looking down the gap between the two dwellings but such a view would not be significant. In any case, the proposed extension is of a simple and traditional design that would respect the simple form and attractive appearance of the existing dwelling. The extension would extend the rear building line of the property by approximately 2 metres compared to the existing kitchen extension and would remain substantially below the height of the existing roof. As well as being in keeping with the design of the existing dwelling, the extension would also be subservient in size and scale to the existing dwelling.
- 6.9 There are limited public views of the rear of the property with such views largely being confined to views from a railway line, some 200 metres to the west. From this direction or from the south or east, the rear extension would be viewed against the bulk of the existing dwelling and that of the neighbouring property, Riverslea, particularly as the extension would not project beyond the existing rear building line of Riverslea.
- 6.10 As previously approved, the proposed rear elevation also includes a relatively modest extension of an existing raised deck area and a half dormer window. Both of these elements of the proposals are in keeping with the character and appearance of the property and would not have a significant visual impact when viewed from outside the confines of the site.

The Impact on the Amenity of Neighbouring Occupiers

- 6.11 Again the differences between the approved details and the details now submitted do not result in any significant change to the impact of the development on the amenity of the neighbouring occupiers. Indeed, the current proposal has actually reduced the number of windows in the north east elevation facing the corresponding side elevation of Riverslea.
- 6.12 The site adjoins two neighbouring occupiers, the garden area of Weir Croft to the south and Riverslea to the east. The proposal would have no discernible impact on Weir Croft as there would be no material increase in overlooking to the garden area some 22 metres from the proposed rear elevation of Spring Cottage. In addition the main dwelling and garden area of Weir Croft is located beyond Riverslea to the south

and east.

- 6.13 Riverslea lies immediately to the east of Spring Cottage and is separated from the site by a distance of approximately 6 metres and a thin hedge. The two dwellings are on a similar building line, but slightly staggered so that the building lines of Riverslea are slightly behind that of Spring Cottage. The side elevation of Riverslea contains two windows, a second floor bedroom window and a first floor window that appears to relate to a pantry area. A door served by an external staircase is also present in the side elevation of Riverslea. Similar window and door openings are present within the side elevation of Spring Cottage that faces Riverslea.
- 6.14 The development proposed to the front of Spring Cottage would have no discernible impact on the amenity of Riverlea as it would be small in scale and located some distance from the boundary with the neighbouring property. The main impact on the neighbouring property therefore results from the proposed two storey rear extension, which has already been granted planning permission.
- 6.15 The rear building line of the extension would match the existing rear building line of Riverslea and in this respect there would be no significant overshadowing of the rear elevation or garden area of Riverslea. The extension would extend the existing two storey element by approximately 2 metres and increase the height from approximately 5 metres to 8.5 metres. As such the extension would result in increased bulk and mass close to the boundary with Riverslea. The impact on the first floor 'pantry' window of Riverslea would not be significant as this window relates to secondary accommodation, and therefore the impact from loss of light/overshadowing is concentrated on the second floor bedroom window. The top of this window would sit slightly above the eaves line of the proposed extension and would be at a distance of 6 metres from the proposed development. This gap, along with the height of the window and the fact that the main part of the roof of the proposed extension would slope further away from the neighbouring property before terminating in the ridge, would still allow for sufficient light to enter the window, particularly in respect of sunlight originating from the south as the properties enjoy south facing garden areas.
- 6.16 There would be some loss of outlook from the window as the extension would block west facing views, however, the loss of a view is not a material consideration and the impact on the extension would not be so overbearing as to warrant the refusal of the application. The window relates to a bedroom rather than primary accommodation such as living/sitting rooms etc. It should also be noted that the Officer offered to view the impact of the extension from Riverslea but was denied access to this property.
- 6.17 The number of openings in the side elevation of Spring Cottage facing Riverslea would be reduced compared to the previous approval, and indeed the current situation. One of the proposed windows relates to a bathroom whilst the second window at first floor relates to a kitchen. The existing bedroom window at second floor level in Spring Cottage mirrors the bedroom window in the side of Riverslea and this is currently glazed in clear glass allowing overlooking between the properties. This bedroom window is removed from the proposed scheme and is effectively replaced with a bathroom window, which should be glazed in obscure glass thereby providing a mutual benefit to the privacy of both properties. The kitchen window as proposed could also be glazed in obscure glass to prevent any overlooking to the neighbouring property from the side of Spring Cottage.
- 6.18 The number, size and height of openings on the rear elevation of Spring Cottage would increase as a result of the proposals. These windows would allow overlooking into the rear garden of Riverslea. However, such a situation already exists with the existing

window arrangement although the increased height of the proposed windows would allow a greater degree of overlooking. Nevertheless, overlooking from rear facing windows into the gardens of neighbouring properties is an extremely common situation in respect of any two and above storey development on a consistent building line. In relation to the above there are no grounds to refuse the application based on overlooking towards Riverslea.

Flood Risk

- 6.19 The site lies within Flood Zone 3, however, the Environment Agency has raised no specific concerns with the proposal, instead directing the LPA to their Standing Advice. This states that either floor levels within the proposed development will be set no lower than existing levels and, flood proofing of the proposed development has been incorporated where appropriate or that floor levels within the extension will be set 300mm above the known or modelled 1% (1 in 100 chance each year) river flood level or 0.5% (1 in 200 chance each year) tidal & coastal flood level. In this case, the proposal includes an extension of the ground floor area, which is totally set aside for flood mitigation. Therefore, the new accommodation is at the same level as the existing, which is approximately 2 metres above ground levels.

Other Material Considerations

- 6.20 Vehicle access and parking is unaffected by the development as are the existing pedestrian access arrangements. The property would retain a large garden comparative to the size of the dwelling and no trees or vegetation of any significance would be removed to facilitate the development.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The application proposal is in accordance with relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, as it is considered that, subject to conditions, the proposal would not cause any undue harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the amenity of adjoining occupiers.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 **That planning permission be granted, subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Commencement – 3 years**
2. **Samples of materials to be approved**
3. **Windows in north east elevation to be obscure glazed apart from window in the north east elevation of the two storey front extension. No additional windows or other openings in the north east elevation.**

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