

Reference: 21/02184/HHA	Site: 7 Churchill Road Grays Essex RM17 6TW
Ward: Tilbury Riverside And Thurrock Park	Proposal: Two storey side extension and single storey and part two storey rear extension with roof lights

Plan Number(s):		
Reference	Name	Received
A01	Existing Plans	28th December 2021
A03	Site Layout	28th December 2021
A02 rev C	Proposed Plans	27th January 2022

The application is also accompanied by:

- Flood Risk Assessment (ref. QFRA 1069 v1.1 dated 29.03.21)

Applicant: Mrs Rasa Racinskiene	Validated: 29 December 2021 Date of expiry: 21 March 2022 (Extension of Time as Agreed)
Recommendation: To Refuse	

This application has been Called In for determination by the Council’s Planning Committee by Cllrs Mayes, Jefferies, Gledhill, Johnson, Hebb and Ralph because of concerns regarding the potential use of the office space for commercial purposes that would require additional parking on a busy junction, and to assess the amenity impact of the two storey proposal upon surrounding neighbours.

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

1.1 This application seeks planning permission for a two storey side extension and single storey and part two storey rear extension with roof lights to the main dwelling on the site. The proposal would provide a study, dining room, bathroom and storage to the ground floor and a third bedroom with an ensuite to the first floor.

1.2 The original application submitted indicated that a room on the ground floor would provide an office area. This room has been re-labelled and revised to a study by the applicant in response to neighbours' comments.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The application site is a two storey detached property located within a corner plot along Churchill Road and Medlar Road. The site is situated within a residential area characterised by spacious, open corner plots.

2.2 Planning permission was granted in 2021 for an attached 2 bedroom dwelling on land to the immediate south of the application site. This dwelling is currently under construction and the plot is identified as 7A Churchill Road on the location plan submitted.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Application Reference	Description of Proposal	Decision
21/02073/CONDC	Application for the approval of details reserved by condition no 3 (Materials/Samples) and 5 (Soft and hard landscaping scheme) of planning permission ref. 21/00758/FUL [Erection of new 1no 2 bed dwelling to land adjacent to existing property with associated landscaping]	Approved
21/00758/FUL	Erection of new 1no 2 bed dwelling to land adjacent to existing property with associated landscaping	Approved
19/01518/FUL	Erection of new 1no 2bed dwelling to flank wall of existing property with vehicular access and associated landscaping	Refused, Appeal Dismissed
19/00169/FUL	Construction of a two storey detached dwelling house	Refused

	including a new vehicle access.	
18/00512/FUL	Construction of a new build dwelling house including a new vehicle access.	Refused

4.0 CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

4.1 Detailed below is a summary of the consultation responses received. The full version of each consultation response can be viewed on the Council's website via public access at the following link: www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning

4.2 PUBLICITY:

This application has been advertised by way of individual neighbour notification letters and public site notice which has been displayed nearby. 21 letters have been received, 9 in support, including a letter from the applicant, supporting for the following reasons:

- Proposal would improve the appearance of the site and property
- Would not be out of character
- Office would be a home office, and not a business use as many people work from home
- Property would be a 3 bedroom house
- Removal of Trees was landowner's choice

and 12 in objection, where four neighbours have written in twice and including an objection from the Ward Councillor, raising the following concerns:

- Loss of Amenity and Privacy
- Overlooking
- Out of Character
- Too Large a Development
- The New Dwelling being constructed has already taken up much of the plot space

- Includes an Office Space and may lead to a change of use
- Overbearing impact
- Additional Traffic
- Access and highway safety concerns
- Loss of Trees

Comments were also made in relation to drainage matters which are not considered material planning considerations and fall under separate legislation.

5.0 POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.1 The revised NPPF was published on 20 July 2021 and sets out the Government's planning policies. Paragraph 2 of the Framework confirms the tests in s.38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and s.70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and that the Framework is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 11 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The following headings and content of the NPPF are relevant to the consideration of the current proposals:

- 4. Decision making
- 12. Achieving well-designed places

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

5.2 In March 2014 the former Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched its planning practice guidance web-based resource. This was accompanied by a Written Ministerial Statement which includes a list of the previous planning policy guidance documents cancelled when the NPPF was launched. NPPG contains a range of subject areas, with each area containing several sub-topics. Those of particular relevance to the determination of this planning application include:

- Design
- Determining a planning application

Local Planning Policy

Thurrock Local Development Framework (as amended) (2015)

5.3 The “Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development” was adopted by Council on the 28th February 2015. The following policies apply to the proposals:

THEMATIC POLICIES

- CSTP22 (Thurrock Design)
- CSTP23 (Thurrock Character and Distinctiveness)
- CSTP27 (Management and Reduction of Flood Risk)

POLICIES FOR MANAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT

- PMD1 (Minimising Pollution and Impacts on Amenity)
- PMD2 (Design and Layout)
- PMD8 (Parking Standards)
- PMD15 (Flood Risk Assessment)

Thurrock Local Plan

5.4 In February 2014 the Council embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan for the Borough. Between February and April 2016 the Council consulted formally on an ‘Issues and Options (Stage 1)’ document and simultaneously undertook a ‘Call for Sites’ exercise. In December 2018 the Council began consultation on an Issues and Options [Stage 2 Spatial Options and Sites] document, this consultation has now closed and the responses have been considered and reported to Council. On 23 October 2019 the Council agreed the publication of the Issues and Options 2 Report of Consultation on the Council’s website and agreed the approach to preparing a new Local Plan.

Thurrock Design Strategy

5.5 In March 2017 the Council launched the Thurrock Design Strategy. The Design Strategy sets out the main design principles to be used by applicants for all new development in Thurrock. The Design Strategy is a supplementary planning document (SPD) which supports policies in the adopted Core Strategy.

Thurrock Residential Alterations and Extensions Design Guide (RAE)

5.6 In September 2017 the Council launched the RAE Design Guide which provides advice and guidance for applicants who are proposing residential alterations and extensions. The Design Guide is a supplementary planning document (SPD) which supports policies in the adopted Core Strategy.

6.0 ASSESSMENT

6.1 The assessment below covers the following areas:

- I. Principle of the Development
- II. Design and Layout and Impact upon the Area
- III. Traffic Impact, Access and Car Parking
- IV. Effect on Neighbouring Properties
- V. Flood Risk

I. PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

6.2 The application site is located within a residential area and as such the principle of development is acceptable, subject to compliance with relevant planning policies.

II. DESIGN AND LAYOUT AND IMPACT UPON THE AREA

6.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the Government attaches great importance to design to the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings.

6.4 Policy PMD1 (Minimising Pollution and Impacts on Amenity) states that “Development will not be permitted where it would cause unacceptable effects on (i) the amenities of the area; (ii) the amenity of neighbouring occupants; or (iii) the amenity of future occupiers of the site”.

6.5 Policy PMD2 (Design and Layout) of the Core Strategy requires that all design proposals should respond to the sensitivity of the site and its surroundings and must contribute positively to the character of the area in which it is proposed and should seek to contribute positively to local views, townscape, heritage assets and natural features and contribute to the creation of a positive sense of place.

6.6 Policy CSTP22 (Thurrock Design) of the Core Strategy states that the Council requires all design proposals to respond to the sensitivity of the site and its surroundings, to fully investigate the magnitude of change that would result from the proposals and mitigate against negative impacts. Amongst other criteria, this policy states that development must contribute positively to the character of the area in which it is proposed. And to surrounding areas that may be affected by it. It should seek to contribute positively to local views, townscapes, heritage assets and natural features and contribute to the creation of a positive sense of place.

- 6.7 Policy CSTP23 (Thurrock Character and Distinctiveness) states that the Council will protect, manage and enhance the character of Thurrock to ensure improved quality and strengthened sense of place.
- 6.8 The Residential Alterations & Extensions SPD (RAE) September 2017 states that:
- 4.1.1 The extension or alterations should respect and respond positively to the character of the original dwelling such that its character is maintained or enhanced.*
- 4.3.1 The form and scale of the extension or outbuilding should be appropriate to the original dwelling and the surrounding development pattern.*
- 4.3.2 Corner plots require a distinct design approach that responds positively not only to the dwelling but also to the neighbouring houses and the street scene.*
- 5.3.1 A side extension should respect the context of the street, preserving gaps between buildings and rhythm of roof profile where these are characteristic of the area.*
- 6.9 The proposed ground floor side extension would measure 4.3m in width by 8.7m in depth and would wrap around the rear extending 4.3m from the rear elevation. The first floor side addition would have an overall depth of 7m meaning that the proposal would extend 2.5m from the rear wall of the property. The proposal would be finished with a hipped roof, stepping down from the original ridge height. The rear extension would have a monopitch roof with rooflights.
- 6.10 The proposed side extension would extend for more than half the width of the existing dwelling and by more than half of the depth of the property and would fill some of the gap between the flank wall and the property boundary next to the highway. The flank wall to boundary separation distance would reduce from approximately 6.8m to 2.5m. It is noted that the area is generally characterised by open plan aspects on corners.
- 6.11 While the detailed design, roof style and choice of materials proposed would not be unacceptable, there are concerns regarding the siting, width, mass and rearward projection of the proposed extensions. The proposal would be highly visible on this exposed corner plot, with the two storey side and rear elements of the development particularly prominent from both Churchill Road and Medlar Road. The visual impact of the proposal would be exacerbated by the particularly open aspect of this corner which, since the removal of two trees from the front of the site, would be entirely open.

- 6.12 The proposal would, by virtue of the width, siting, mass and rearward projection of the extension, be likely to have a detrimental impact upon the openness within the street scene contrary to the criteria in the RAE. The proposal would be obtrusive to its immediate surroundings and would be overly prominent in the street scene and harmful to the area. The development would, therefore, result in harm to the street scene and the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policies PMD2, CSTP22 and CSTP23 of the Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended) (2015) the RAE 2017 and guidance in the NPPF 2021.
- 6.13 Immediately North of the application site is 1 Medlar Road which is also a corner plot. This property had a two storey side extension approved in 2003 (planning application ref. 03/00223/FUL) and subsequently built. This extension has resulted in a similar reduction in the flank wall to boundary separation distance however, the extension to this dwelling only relates to the side and does not include extending to the rear of the property and hence the extension has a reduced visual impact upon the appearance of this corner and immediate locality. The extension was also approved some years prior to the adoption of the Council's Core Strategy and Design Guidance. This extension is the only example of similar development in the immediate vicinity and for the reasons previously explained is not considered to amount to a precedent for granting permission that may be contrary to Policy for this current proposal.

III. TRAFFIC IMPACT, ACCESS AND CAR PARKING

- 6.14 The proposal would not affect the current parking arrangements on site, nor would they result in any concern regarding pedestrian or highway safety. It is noted that neighbours have raised concerns in regard to the potential use of part of the ground floor for commercial purposes. The application states that the room in question on the ground floor would be used as a study and there would be no reason to consider that a commercial use would be proposed. The application would comply with Policy PMD8 with respect to parking provisions.

IV. EFFECT ON NEIGHBOURING PROPERTIES

- 6.15 The proposal would have most impact upon the neighbour to the immediate East at no. 2 Medlar Road. There would be no increased or unacceptable overlooking resulting from the ground floor windows to the rear of the proposal. There are two windows proposed in the first floor rear of the side extension that would serve a walk in wardrobe and a bathroom. These first floor rear windows would be located approximately 9.5m away from the flank wall of no. 2 Medlar Road. A detached garage serving no. 2 is also situated between both properties. A ground floor flank window that would appear to serve a kitchen, or other main living area, as well as

flank windows in the neighbour's rear conservatory would be overlooked by the proposed first floor rear windows. It is noted these proposed rear windows would not serve main living areas and it is considered that, if the application were deemed to be acceptable, an appropriate condition could be imposed ensuring these non-habitable room windows would be fitted with permanently fixed obscure glazing to prevent any unacceptable overlooking and loss of privacy.

- 6.16 Due to the separation distance between the proposal and the orientation of other surrounding neighbours, including the new dwelling under construction, the proposal would not result in any unacceptable overbearing impacts. In all other respects, given the relationship between the dwelling and all other neighbouring properties, including the new dwelling currently under construction, it is considered that there would be no detrimental impact upon neighbouring amenity, in accordance with policy PMD1.

V. FLOOD RISK

- 6.17 The site is located within a Flood Zones 2 and 3 and in an area where there are also flood risk defences. The application is for a relatively minor development and an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted as part of this householder planning application. On this basis the applicant has demonstrated that proposal would not present an unacceptable risk to occupiers or the surrounding area and the application would comply with Policies CSTP27 and PMD15.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND REASON FOR REFUSAL

- 7.1 The introduction of an extension of the width, siting, mass and rearward projection of the proposal would be likely to have a detrimental impact upon the openness within the street scene contrary to the criteria in the RAE. Due to its high visibility in the street scene, it is considered that the development would appear out of character and as an incongruous feature on this corner plot and to the wider street scene contrary to the Core Strategy 2015, RAE (2017) and NPPF.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 REFUSE for the following reason:

1. The proposal would, by virtue of the width, siting, mass and rearward projection of the extension, be likely to have a detrimental impact upon the openness within the street scene contrary to the criteria in the Council's Residential Alterations and Extensions SPD. The proposal would therefore be obtrusive to its immediate surroundings, overly prominent in the street scene and harmful to the character and

appearance of the area contrary to Policies CSTP22, CSTP23 and PMD2 of the Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development (as amended) (2015), the Thurrock Design Guide: Residential Alterations and Extensions (RAE) SPD (2017) the NPPF.

Documents:

All background documents including application forms, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:

www.thurrock.gov.uk/planning

