

APPLICATION NO: 13/02118/FUL	OFFICER: Mr Martin Chandler
DATE REGISTERED: 16th December 2013	DATE OF EXPIRY: 10th February 2014
WARD: College	PARISH:
APPLICANT: Mr & Mrs Collard	
AGENT: SF Planning Limited	
LOCATION: 44 Naunton Park Road, Cheltenham	
PROPOSAL: Erection of a two storey side extension together with the rendering of the dwelling (revision to 11/01575/FUL)	

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse



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1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND PROPOSAL

- 1.1 The application proposes the erection of a two storey side extension and a loft conversion together with the rendering of the property.
- 1.2 The application is an identical submission to that originally submitted for application ref: 11/01575/FUL. That scheme was subsequently amended to reduce the level of proposed render to the side and rear of the property and the first floor element of the approved side extension (which was amended to be set back one metre from the front of the dwelling).
- 1.3 The application site is located within the central conservation area.
- 1.4 The application is brought to Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Sudbury to allow the committee to consider the design merits of the proposal. Members will visit the site on planning view.

2. CONSTRAINTS AND RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Constraints:

Conservation Area
Smoke Control Order

Relevant Planning History:

11/01575/FUL 9th May 2012 PER

Erection of a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension, and loft conversion with rear dormer window, rendered external insulation

3. POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Adopted Local Plan Policies

CP 4 Safe and sustainable living
CP 7 Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Residential Alterations and Extensions (2008)

Central conservation area: Leckhampton Character Area and Management Plan (July 2008)

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

4. CONSULTATIONS

Heritage and Conservation

29th January 2014

Comments:

1. The principle of extending No.44 has been established by approval of 11/01575/FUL.
2. The key issues of this proposal are the appropriateness of rendering the entire building and whether the first floor extension on the side of the building should be in line with the front elevation or set back.

3. Development on the road has occurred over several distinct periods and this is reflected in the different styles, plot widths, building lines and window treatments.
4. Uniformity to some degree is achieved by the predominant use of brick as the main building material.
5. There are a few examples of rendered buildings but they are singular buildings like the grey rendered detached building at the mid point in the road or the pair of large rough cast rendered buildings at the Old Bath Road end of the road.
6. The remainder of the buildings on the road are in discernible groups identifiable by when they were built.
7. No.44 is one of four houses built at the same time to a similar specification: the plot width, fenestration, architectural detailing, pitch of the roofs and, most identifiable, the materials are matching.
8. A certain amount of change/development is permissible without losing group distinctiveness but altering the wall treatment of the principle elevation, i.e. by rendering over the brick, would compromise the group unity and is not considered acceptable in a conservation area.
9. The rendering of the front façade of No.44 would result in its visual dominance of the group and the road which would detrimentally affect the character of the road and conservation area.
10. The proposed scheme attempts to impose symmetry on an existing asymmetrical front elevation by extending the hipped roof and placing the extension on the same building line as the existing.
11. The position of the off-centre upper storey casement window and the front door below it prevents true symmetry and the resulting composition is uncomfortable.
12. In my opinion a deliberate asymmetrical front elevation would be preferred: the other three houses in the group have been extended and the asymmetrical façade retained, this works well.

Summary

The principle of extending No.44 is acceptable subject to detailed designs. However, the use of render on the front façade is not appropriate in an area which brick is the predominant building material and where the different phases of piecemeal development along the road are discernible in groups of houses bearing similarities in architectural style, proportion and fenestration. The attempt to unify the proposed development with existing in a symmetrical composition fails and an asymmetrical solution is preferred.

CONCLUSION:

Please ask applicant to re-submit revised designs that address my concerns or refuse.

Refusal reason: The proposed extension by virtue of the materials and composition would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. Accordingly, the proposals are contrary to section 72(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF and PPS5 (Planning for the Historic Environment) and policy CP7 of the Adopted Cheltenham Borough Local plan.

Building Control

23rd December 2013
No comment at this time.

5. PUBLICITY AND REPRESENTATIONS

Number of letters sent	9
Total comments received	7
Number of objections	0
Number of supporting	6
General comment	1

5.1 Comments Received

- 5.1.1** Nine letters were sent out to notify neighbouring properties of this application. In addition, a site notice was posted adjacent to the site as well as an advert being placed within the Gloucestershire Echo.
- 5.1.2** In response to this publicity, seven letters have been received in support of the proposal; some of which suggest that this proposed scheme is a more pleasing proposal than the consented scheme.
- 5.1.3** One letter has also been received in relation to potential loss of privacy, although it should be noted that this is not an objection to the scheme.

6. OFFICER COMMENTS

6.1 Determining Issues

- 6.1.1** The key considerations in relation to this application are the impact that the proposal will have on the existing building, and potential impact on neighbouring amenity. The consented scheme is also an important material consideration.

6.2 The site and its context

- 6.2.1** The application site is a detached, red brick dwelling located within the Leckhampton character area of the central conservation area. As identified by the Conservation Officer's comments which are set out above, the site forms one of four houses of a similar appearance, albeit one of these properties fronts on to Old Bath Road.
- 6.2.2** The rest of Naunton Park Road is comprised principally of red brick properties, which whilst of differing architectural styles, give the road a distinct character. It is accepted that there are examples of render within the road but as advised by the Conservation Officer, they are singular buildings like the grey rendered detached building at the mid point in the road or the pair of large rough cast rendered buildings at the Old Bath Road end of the road.

6.3 Design and layout

- 6.3.1** Local Plan Policy CP7 requires development to be of a high standard of architectural design and to complement and respect neighbouring development. When assessing this proposal against the requirements of this policy, there are two aspects to consider; firstly, the use of render, and secondly, the suitability of the extensions proposed.

- 6.3.2** The proposal to render the extended dwelling is considered unacceptable. The Conservation Officer has undertaken a detailed analysis of the street and in summarising her thoughts, the following comments are useful; *the use of render on the front façade is not appropriate in an area which brick is the predominant building material and where the different phases of piecemeal development along the road are discernible in groups of houses bearing similarities in architectural style, proportion and fenestration.*
- 6.3.3** When assessed against the requirements of policy CP7, officers are of the strong view that the introduction of render would result in a dwelling that will appear alien within the street scene thereby failing to complement and respect neighbouring development. If the dwelling were part of a street with a more varied use of materials, officers may be more sympathetic to the proposal, but given the dominance of red brick within the vicinity, the introduction of render would be harmful to the street and wider conservation area.
- 6.3.4** During discussions with the applicant, it has been suggested verbally that the proposal to render the property is to be withdrawn from the application although this has not been confirmed in writing. Should the scheme be amended in this form, members will be updated.
- 6.3.5** Turning to the proposed extension, officers again have concerns with the proposal as submitted; a view that is consistent with the 2011 approval which was amended in line with officer advice following a number of discussions with the applicant's agent at the time.
- 6.3.6** To aid consideration of applications of this nature, this Authority has an adopted supplementary planning document (SPD) titled 'Residential alterations and extensions' and as well as local plan policy CP7, the advice within this document is a material consideration of significant weight.
- 6.3.7** The introduction to this SPD sets out the rationale behind seeking good quality design when extending dwellings. For completeness, this introduction is set out in full below;
- 6.3.8** *Cheltenham has a proud tradition of good urban design. It's Regency and Victorian architecture, with houses grouped in terraces and villas around wide streets and open spaces, is justly famous. Cheltenham has an image of an elegant, spacious town with groups of well proportioned buildings set in generous gardens, with open space extending into the heart of the town.*
- 6.3.9** *This is true of the early town but Cheltenham's more recent residential areas are different. They were built in response to a need to accommodate smaller houses on smaller plots, as well as motor vehicles. These areas, dating from the later Victorian era to the present day, have their own character. It stems from the layout, design and style of the houses and the colour of the materials used.*
- 6.3.10** *The spaces between the houses, the greenery and the nature of the front boundary fences, walls, hedges (or the lack of them) all contribute to this character. At the edges of the Borough, housing development forms a gateway to the town and the edge between town and country. Good design is as essential here as it is in the historic parts of the town.*
- 6.3.11** The document then goes on to outline five basic design principles, one of which is the importance of subservience. This report will now consider this concept in slightly more detail.

7. Subservience

- 7.1** Within the Council's adopted SPD, the following advice is provided in relation to subservience;
- 7.2** *An extension should not dominate or detract from the original building, but play a 'supporting role'. Generally, the extension should not be higher than the original. A well-*

designed extension is normally set back from the main elevation but there can be exceptions to this principle in some circumstances – discuss this with the planning officer. The materials should either match or complement the existing building.

- 7.3** When assessing the proposal in its current form, officers do not consider that the proposal adequately responds to this guidance. The proposed extension simply seeks to make the property wider without paying any regard to the integrity of the existing building; as the conservation officer states, the proposal seeks to almost impose a certain level of symmetry on a currently asymmetrical building.
- 7.4** As advised above, a well-designed extension is normally set back from the main elevation and members will be familiar with a one metre set back often being required when considering side extensions; this was achieved with the consented scheme.
- 7.5** The rationale behind a set back is to enable the evolution of the dwelling to be understood. The SPD talks about extensions playing a supporting role; it seeks to ensure that extensions are sympathetic to the parent building – that they respect it and identify the host building as the principal feature of the site. A set back achieves this as it enables the extension to effectively frame the original building by not only respecting the front wall, but also reducing the ridge height of the extension so the original roof slope can be understood. It is a concept that officers use on a daily basis but subservience does not always have to be achieved by introducing a one metre set back.
- 7.6** Members will be well aware that each application brings with it its own considerations and whilst a one metre set back (at first floor level) was achieved in the previous submission, officers consider that there is some room for manoeuvre here. A one metre set back is often more important when considering an extension to a semi-detached dwelling; indeed this is exactly the advice within this Authority's SPD. Nevertheless, for this application to be compliant with adopted design advice as well as local plan policy the proposal does need to achieve a degree of subservience – it fails to do this in its current form and therefore cannot be supported.
- 7.7** Officers have discussed a smaller set back with the applicant, suggesting that 500mm would achieve the desired aims; it would enable the extension to be read as an addition to the dwelling, rather than simply widening the building in what is considered to be a crude and unsympathetic manner. It would also address the concerns identified by the Conservation Officer. Unfortunately, this compromise has not been forthcoming and therefore the proposal cannot be supported. The extension would be an unsympathetic addition to the dwelling which would be harmful to the existing building, the street scene and the wider conservation area. It would therefore fail to comply with the aims and objectives of local plan policy CP7 and also the adopted SPD 'Residential alterations and extensions'.

8. Impact on neighbouring property

- 8.1** It is not considered that the proposed extension will compromise neighbouring amenity. Permission has been granted for a two storey extension and the loft conversion and this proposal will have the same level of impact on neighbouring amenity.
- 8.2** The proposal is compliant with policy CP4 of the Local Plan.

9. Other considerations

- 9.1** Officers are aware that neighbouring properties have written in to support the proposal and officers have taken these comments into account whilst assessing the application.

Having reflected on their comments, it is considered that the fundamental policy objection and the impact on the wider conservation area outweigh the comments provided from the neighbours.

10. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1** To conclude, officers are firmly of the view that the proposed extension fails to comply with local plan policy CP7 and the advice contained within the supplementary planning document titled 'Residential alterations and extensions'. The proposal fails to achieve any degree of subservience to the parent dwelling and the introduction of render within a street scene dominated by red brick properties would be harmful to the wider conservation area.
- 10.2** The principle of extending the house is not disputed. The dwelling benefits from a planning permission to extend the property but in a manner that is consistent with this Authority's policies and supplementary guidance. This proposal fails to achieve these important objectives and therefore cannot be supported.
- 10.3** It is recommended that members resolve to refuse planning permission based on the analysis set out within this report, and for the reason set out below.

11. REFUSAL REASONS

- 1 The proposed alterations and extensions fail to complement and respect the parent dwelling. The use of render would result in a visually discordant and jarring property set within a street scene of principally red brick properties. In addition, the proposed side extension does not achieve any degree of subservience to the existing dwelling. The extension fails to play a supporting role to the dwelling by virtue of its lack of set back, reduced ridge height or reduced eaves height and in this respect detracts from the original form of the dwelling contrary to the advice set out within the Council's adopted SPD titled 'Residential alterations and extensions' and policy CP7 of the Cheltenham Borough Local Plan (Adopted 2006). It therefore follows that the proposed extension also fails to comply with the guidance set out within section 7 of the NPPF 'Requiring good design'.