Roberts & Wrigley
Mr McPherson

WB/09/0250/FULL
SEL
MPO

Location : 33 Church Walk

Proposal: Proposed single storey extension to rear of property.



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1. THE PROPOSAL AND THE SITE

Permission is sought to extend the rear of the property with a single storey flat roof extension approximately 2.9 metres in height, 5.5 metres in width and 4 metres in depth. It would be adjacent to the ground floor bedroom and would serve to accommodate the medical needs of the applicant's stepson for a sterile room, toilet, and wet room. There would be two high level windows inserted in the west elevation and one in the east. The rear elevation would simply contain a pair of french doors.

The property is on the north side of the just east of Gannon Road. St. George's Church is located to the south east. There are a number of Victorian terraced and semi-detached properties in the area.

The application property is a two-storey semi-detached house with front and rear bays, pebbledashed rendered walls and lower facing brick painted white, together with a black painted mock Tudor gable.

2. APPLICANT'S DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

No formal Design and Access Statement has been submitted with the application but the applicant has subsequently submitted a letter and an assessment prepared by an occupational therapist at West Sussex County Council setting out the patient's condition, difficulties and needs.

The son developed a bowel infarct, which is a severe restriction of blood supply, and now uses a stoma bag. He also relies on a Hickman line for his nutritional needs and has brittle bones as a result of his nutritional problems. He is able to maintain his personal care and carry out minor domestic activities.

He has difficulty with stairs. The only bathroom is upstairs and the house has no downstairs toilet or bathing facilities. He has difficulty stepping into a bath and needs a freestanding shower and toilet on the ground floor next to his bedroom which is at the rear of the house. He also requires a special sterile area and medical store for his equipment. Without such facilities he is very dependent on family members and at risk of infection. If he gets an infection (which happens frequently and makes him very ill) he has to go to Southampton Hospital for treatment.

3. CONSULTATIONS

The **Executive Head of Health, Housing and Community Safety** raises no objection.

4. REPRESENTATIONS

One letter of objection has been received from the neighbour to the east, No. 33a Church Walk, which is summarised below:

i) There will be loss of light to the rear living room because the extension will be one metre higher than the existing wall and would obstruct light entering the only window serving the living room.

ii) There will be overshadowing of the living room and patio with the extension less than one metre from the living room window causing overshadowing of the living room and patio. It will be overbearing, depriving the neighbour of afternoon and early evening sunlight.

iii) The Worthing Borough Council leaflet, 'Extending or Altering Your Home (supplementary planning guidance)' recommends that an extension should not project more than 3 metres.

iv) If the extension were sited 2-3 metres from the dividing wall none of these issues would arise.

5. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

The applicant has proposed an extension to meet his medical needs. Government advice makes it clear that the personal circumstances of an occupier may be material to the consideration of a planning application but will seldom outweigh the more general planning considerations. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: Extending or Altering Your Home recognises that each application should be considered on its merits. Clearly, if a householder requires special medical facilities where a ground floor extension is needed because of a medical condition, there may be grounds for considering a proposal as an exception to normal control standards. These personal considerations can sometimes be given greater weight but must be carefully weighed against the harm to the neighbours. As such, the proposal should be considered against Saved Worthing Local Plan Policies H18 and H16 and allied Supplementary Planning Guidance: Extending or Altering Your Home, and South East Plan Policies BE1, CC6 and SCT1.

Visual impact

Although the extension has a flat roof that does little to reflect the inherent features of the original dwelling and involves the removal of the ground floor bay window, which is an attractive feature, it is to the rear of the property where it is not visible from a public vantage point, and, as such, a refusal on design grounds would not seem appropriate in the circumstances.

Impact upon neighbours

The ground floor of the application property, has a ground floor bay to the bedroom positioned close to the shared boundary and is mirrored by the adjoining dwelling, No. 33a Church Walk. The bay next door serves a living room and the shared boundary between the two properties comprises a wall topped with a close boarded fence at a height of approximately 2 metres.

Saved Worthing local plan policy H16 seeks to control house extensions to avoid serious harm to neighbours' living conditions. This is amplified in the related Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Extending or Altering Your Home'. This Guidance states that:-

"As most dwellings have the main windows to principal rooms facing towards the front and back of the property, extensions close to a neighbours boundary can significantly reduce the amount of daylight and sunlight reaching the principal rooms of adjoining houses…this problem may often be overcome in

the case of single storey extensions by ensuring that they do not project more than 3m (10ft) from the rear wall of the original dwelling house."

In this case, by exceeding the recommended depth for an extension on such a narrow plot by 1 metre and being constructed less than one metre from the shared boundary, the extension would appear to have an overbearing impact and would cause some late afternoon overshadowing of the neighbouring property reducing the amount of sun to his garden and daylight entering his ground floor living room. The impact is heightened because it is a bay window and is the only window to this living room but as the window essentially faces north the amount of sunlight through it would be limited. The extension would also affect the outlook from this bay.

Discussions with the agent have established that a rear extension within the limits of permitted development could not provide for the needs of the applicant. However, Officers consider that there may be scope to provide for a smaller extension or one of a differing design which would have a less harmful effect on the neighbouring property. This may be achieved by establishing with the applicant's agent the minimum size required to achieve the necessary space. For example, based on the submitted plans it would appear that the toilet and wet room may possibly be combined to save room. Also, the sterile room seems unnecessarily large and could be reduced. The sterile room is on the side of No. 33a Church Walk and any reduction to this area may be enough to give favourable support to a revised proposal.

In contrast to the impact upon No. 33a, due to the design and relationship with No. 31 and other neighbouring dwellings, it is not considered that the extension would have any adverse impact upon any other neighbours.

CONCLUSION

Whilst Officers are very sympathetic to the needs of the applicant for an extension to meet his medical requirements at home, the form of the proposed extension is such that it is too deep and too close to the boundary and the bay window of No. 33a Church Walk and would cause harm to the amenities of that property and should be refused.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Refuse on the grounds that:-

1 The proposed extension, due to its depth and proximity to the eastern boundary of the site, would have an unneighbourly and overbearing impact on No. 33a Church Walk with a reduction in outlook and resulting in some overshadowing and, as such, the proposal conflicts with Saved Worthing Local Plan Policies H18 and H16 and Supplementary Planning Guidance: Extending or Altering Your Home and the South East Plan.

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Observations of the Executive Head of Health, Housing and Community Safety.
Extending or Altering Your Home (Supplementary Planning Guidance).

2nd June 2009