

Planning Team
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council,
Hinckley Hub
Rugby Road
Hinckley
LE10 0FR

Application reference 23/00633/HOU

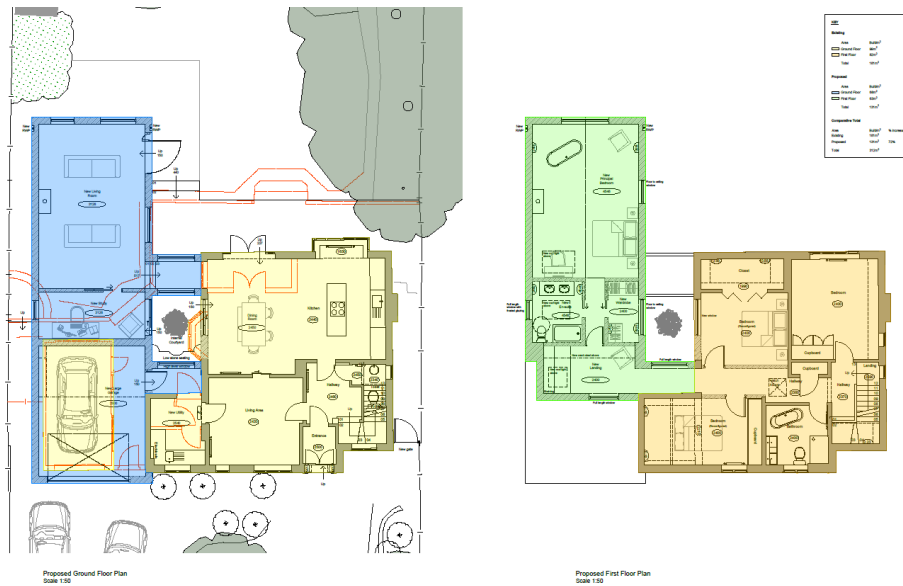
18th August 2023

Dear Planning,

Comments Relating to Planning Application ref: 23/00633/HOU at 9 Boyslade Road, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire LE10 2RF.

Context

1. We write on behalf of our client Mr Anderson in relation to the above planning application which is currently under consideration.
2. The application concerns extensions to the side and rear of the existing house in order to accommodate additional living space and a study at ground floor level and a further bedroom on the first floor.
3. The diagram below shows the extensions highlighted in blue on the ground floor and green on the first floor. Whilst the extended areas are not insignificant in footprint the coloured plans show how the two storey elements are set substantially further back than the existing dwelling. They also highlight that the width of building within its plot is not materially increased.

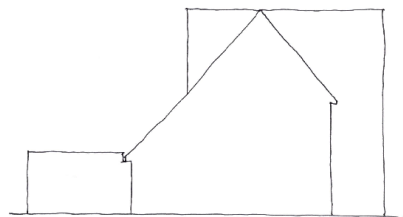


4. The massing of the building is further explained by way of the following sketch rationale (prepared by Walters Architects). The first diagram shows the building as it stands, the second shows how the landing extension replicates the existing garage below, the third reveals how the rear gable is in fact a subservient form of the existing gable and lastly diagram 4 illustrates the unity achieved by replicating pitch across the scheme. The result is a series of layered elements which step down from the existing house.

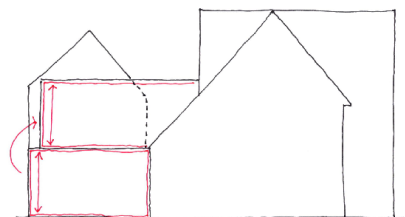
Supporting Diagrams

2-storey side and rear extension to an existing dwelling.
Relationship to Existing Dwelling

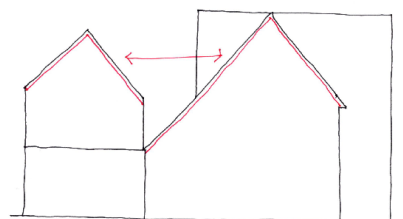
① EXISTING.



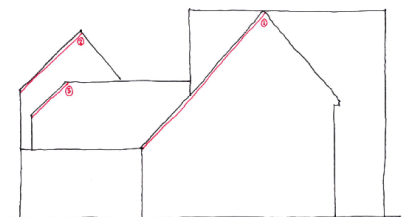
② PROPORTIONS OF EXISTING GARAGE REALIZED TO CREATE LINK.



③ GABLE HEIGHTS + REDUCED IN SIZE.



④ SLOPES OF ROOFS USED TO CHAMFER LINK.



5. The massing diagrams below, (also prepared by Walters Architects), further illustrate the massing rationale for the building and show the new elements are subservient when viewed from the public realm.



6. The purpose of this letter is to address concerns raised in relation to the design of the extensions which have been relayed during the course of the application. These are cited within an Email from the Council sent on the 26th July as set out below:

“The submitted D&A Statement makes clear that the proposal does not seek to reflect the traditional character and appearance of the existing dwelling but instead seeks a contemporary design solution. Such development is not considered to be unacceptable in principle. However, what is being proposed is a substantial extension to the dwelling and I am not convinced that its size/scale/design/appearance in relation to the existing is sufficiently respectful or complementary to meet the requirements of the relevant policies of the adopted Development Plan and the adopted Good Design Guide.

The proposed flat roof (landing) link from the existing dwelling to the extension is considered to present a particularly poor aspect to the street scene and it is suggested that this is re-considered in favour of a more traditional design/style and appearance to reflect that of the existing dwelling. Overall it is considered that the proposal is not at all well integrated with the existing dwelling and that amendments to the internal layout may help to overcome some of the issues created.

7. It is hoped that this letter will assist in a reasonable assessment of the application against relevant policies and guidance.

Development Plan Context

8. The Development Plan for Hinckley and Bosworth comprises the Core Strategy DPD (December 2009) and the Site Allocation and Development Management Policies DPD (July 2016) (SADMP). The site also falls within the parish of Burbage which is subject to a Neighbourhood Plan made in May 2021.
9. Policy DM10 of the SADMP document deals with design and states:

“Developments will be permitted providing that the following requirements are met:

 - a) It would not have a significant adverse effect on the privacy and amenity of nearby residents and occupiers of adjacent buildings, including matters of lighting, air quality (including odour), noise, vibration and visual intrusion;*
 - b) The amenity of occupiers of the proposed development would not be adversely affected by activities in the vicinity of the site;*
 - c) It **complements or enhances** the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features;*
 - d) The use and application of building materials respects the materials of existing, adjoining/neighbouring buildings and the local area generally;*
 - e) It incorporates a high standard of landscaping where this would add to the quality of the design and siting;*
 - f) It maximises opportunities for the conservation of energy and resources through design, layout, orientation and construction in line with Core Strategy Policy 24;*
 - g) Where parking is to be provided charging points for electric or low emission vehicles are included where feasible;*
 - h) An appropriate Sustainable Drainage Scheme is submitted to and approved by the relevant Authority. Schemes should incorporate wildlife areas, ponds, swales and permeable paving where appropriate;*

i) It maximises natural surveillance and incorporates the principles of Secured by Design and has considered the incorporation of fire safety measures.

In exceptional circumstances where outstanding, innovative design is demonstrated (particularly where high levels of sustainability are an integral feature), applications will be considered favourably, even where this may result in some limited conflict with the above criteria.” [emphasis added]

10. Policy DM10 provides a generic overview relating to design and, as with many overarching design policies, calls for design which complements the surrounding area. Accordingly this does not mean that new design needs to replicate its surroundings only that it should add value to its context.
11. The Hinckley Good Design Guide 2020, (HDG) expands on the SADMP Design policy and provides specific advice relating to house extensions.
12. At page 10, the HDG explains that the key aim of the house extensions design guidance is to ensure that adequate space is retained between and around buildings.
13. In order to achieve this it sets a series of space standards, including minimum garden sizes. It is worth noting that the proposed extensions do not infringe on any of the suggested distances and that a generous garden well in excess of 80 square metres remains. Accordingly the key principle of retaining adequate space around the dwelling is met and the scale of the extensions in themselves must be acceptable.
14. The HDG continues to examine extensions in different locations and offers advice on both side and rear extensions. It states that rear extensions must be designed to be “clearly subordinate” to the main dwelling. This it cites can be achieved by ensuring extensions are of an appropriate height, width and depth and that they complement the design and materials used for the original building. The HDG expands further that where there are no public views into a

site a “fully integrated two storey extension” may be acceptable where there is no harm to amenity.

15. The rear extension component is lower than the existing house and has a smaller and narrower footprint. The layered design approach means that it steps both down and away from the existing dwelling. It forms a clear and distinct modern element that does not in any way compete with the original dwelling. It is not visible from the public realm other than by way of the side gable which is set behind lower elements deep into the plot. There would be no harm to amenity meaning that this element of the proposal is not at odds with the adopted design guidance.
16. The HDG goes on to offer advice relating to two storey side extensions saying that they should set down from the ridge of the existing house and set back from the front elevation by at least 0.5 metres.
17. The two storey side extension element of the proposal clearly fulfills these aims. It is set much lower than the ridge of the existing house and is set back well into the plot. There is accordingly no conflict with the guidance relating to side extensions.
18. The HDG concludes with advice relating to detailing, roofscape and fenestration. It states that detailing should intergate coherently and this can be achieved by replicating architectural detail such as heads and cills as appropriate. Again this does not imply that only matching existing detail will be appropriate simply that this is one approach which can achieve coherent integration.
19. In terms of roofscape the HDG notes that this a key character forming feature in terms of shape, pitch and materiality. Specific advice relating to flat roofs is offered:

*“Flat roofs will not normally be considered appropriate **where they do not form part of the original design of the house**, however in some circumstances where they are not visible from the public realm and the use of a flat roof may result in a reduced visual impact they may be considered acceptable,*

particularly if designed with a contemporary aesthetic style." [emphasis added]

20. The proposals include a flat roofed element but this simply replicates the flat roof element of the existing dwelling and is an element that forms part of original design of the house. Furthermore it has been designed as contemporary aesthetic to provide contrast and distinction from the original dwelling, allowing it to remain the dominant structure.
21. In terms of fenestration the HDG advocates retention of the scale, rhythm, proportion and detail of existing windows. It explains the existing emphasis of the building should be reflected OR complemented.
22. The extensions contain windows which are larger than those in the original dwelling, (they replicate width and positioning but are taller). However, the extended elements are intended to form a modern contrast and the proportion and finish of the new windows will complement rather than reflect those of the existing dwelling. Altering the size of them would dilute this contrasting design ethos to the point it would fail as an approach.
23. The Burbage Neighbourhood Plan offers limited advice relating to the design of new extensions beyond at paragraph 15.3 stating extensions should use materials, design and scale compatible with original buildings. It contains no specific policy of relevance.
24. From this there is no failure to comply with policy DM10 as expanded by the more recent Hinckley Good Design Guide. The proposed extensions follow a clear design ethos where a contemporary element has been designed to complement the existing dwelling. This in no way dominates the existing house, particularly from the public realm, and there is no harm visually or in terms of amenity. The proposal is wholly compliant with the Development Plan in this respect.

Officer Concerns

25. Correspondence received from the case officer suggest two areas of concern relating to:
- a. The scale of the extensions, which the officer feels may not be subservient to the dwelling **in combination with** the design contrast. The concept of a contrasting design is not regarded as an issue in its own right with the officer stating that this is acceptable in principle.
 - b. The flat roofed element which the officer considers to present a poor element to the street scene.
26. Given that the approach of a modern contrast is confirmed as acceptable and given that scale alone does not offend the policies in the Development Plan; it must be the combination of these two factors which are giving rise to the concerns raised. However, this approach fails to recognise that the larger modern contrasting element is only glimpsed from the public realm and that it is wholly subservient to the existing dwelling in this regard. It is only from the private rear garden of the property that both the scale and contrast of the extensions would be observed in tandem. This cannot constitute visual harm sufficient to refuse planning permission, irrespective of any individual design preference. Indeed the HDG makes it clear that where extensions are not visible from the public realm there is a greater tolerance in terms of scale and appearance.
27. As referenced above the flat roofed element reflects the form of the existing house and garage. This is considered to be acceptable within the HDG and is given further weight by the modern aesthetic this roof form represents, again supported by the HDG. It is a modern twist on the existing dwelling but nevertheless remains completely secondary being set much lower than the existing house and also well behind the established frontage.

28. Given this we do not consider that the concerns raised should necessitate revisions to the design. The scale is acceptable in terms of the guidance in the HDG, the contrasting approach is considered a valid one and the flat roof form in this instance is fully supported by the HDG. In combination these factors do not cause visual harm due to the positioning and visibility of the elements concerned.

Conclusion

29. Our analysis reveals there is no conflict with the Development Plan policy and supporting HDG in terms of design.
30. The proposal represents a modern design which complements the existing dwelling in terms of scale, detailing, roof form and fenestration. Accordingly there would be no visual harm sufficient to justify refusal of planning permission.
31. If we can be of any further assistance or support to the Council in this matter please do not hesitate to contact Karen Brightman at this office.

Yours sincerely

**Karen Brightman MRTPI,
Planning Director,
Marrons**