

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 1 APRIL 2021**PART 2**

Report of the Head of Planning

PART 2Applications for which **PERMISSION** is recommended

2.1 REFERENCE NO - 21/500138/FULL		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL Erection of part single, part two storey side and rear extension including Juliet balcony, together with roof alterations to create first floor with front and rear dormers.		
ADDRESS 115 Sterling Road Tunstall Sittingbourne Kent ME10 1SW		
RECOMMENDATION - Grant		
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE Parish Council objection		
WARD Woodstock	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Tunstall	APPLICANT Mr & Mrs K Reardon AGENT Woodstock Associates
DECISION DUE DATE 09/04/2021		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 05/02/21

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.1 115 Sterling Road is a semi detached bungalow situated in the built up area of Sittingbourne/Tunstall, amongst similar properties. There is amenity space to the front of the property which has been hard landscaped to allow for off-road parking, this leads down the side of the property to a detached, unoriginal, single garage and amenity space at the rear. The rear garden of the property is approximately 13.5m long and slopes gently down the rear where similar bungalows (also in Sterling Road) back onto the rear boundary at a minimum distance of 24.5m.
- 1.2 The streetscene here is made up of similar sized and designed properties, the majority of which have undergone some form of extension or roof alteration, but this property is one of the few that has not as yet been significantly altered, and it retains its original hipped roof form.
- 1.3 The attached neighbouring property has a conservatory style extension set on the common boundary with No, 115 that projects approximately 4m from its rear wall.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 This application proposes a hip-to-gable roof alteration, with new first floor accommodation lit by new front and rear dormer windows, as well as a single storey/two storey side and rear extension which includes a Juliet balcony at the rear.

- 2.2 The main roof would be changed from a full hip to a gable end, providing two bedrooms and a bathroom lit by a double dormer to the front slope, and a single dormer to the rear slope. These dormers were initially shown to be clad in timber boarding, but amended drawings (submitted at my request) now show that they would be clad in hanging tiles to match the streetscene.
- 2.3 The single storey side extension would project 2.0m out from the original side elevation of the property, leaving a 1.0m clear gap to the boundary line. It would have a pitched roof and run alongside the property where it would join to the proposed rear extension. The front door would be relocated from the side of the original property to the front of the side extension, and this extension would have a side window serving a w.c.
- 2.4 The proposed rear extension would project 3.05m from the original rear elevation along the common boundary with 113 Sterling Road. Adjacent to the boundary the extension would be in single storey flat roofed form with bi-fold doors to the rear. Further from the boundary the extension would be in two storey form with a pitched roof, but this would be more than 2m away from either side boundary. This two storey part of the extension would have bi-fold doors at ground floor level and double doors providing a Juliet balcony on the first floor, with further glazing above in the gable end. The extension would contain a side window at the first floor serving an en-suite bathroom. The Juliet balcony would (at 21.5m) be more than 21m from the nearest elevations of properties to the rear.
- 2.5 In summary, the downstairs of the property would have an L shape wrap around extension, part of which (at the rear) would be in two storey form to create a third bedroom, along with a front double dormer and rear single dormer. The property would change from a two bedroom bungalow to a three bedroom property. Drawings show that all windows, including those on the main house, would be in anthracite grey.
- 2.6 The full range of amendments to the scheme that have been negotiated are as follows:
- Omission of the proposal to white render the whole property in favour of all external wall finishes matching the brick of the host property
 - Changing the timber cladding on the dormers to hung tiles, and
 - Sticking with the original roof tile type instead of the initially proposed black slate tile choice

3. PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

- 3.1 None.

4. POLICY AND CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017 policies:

- CP4 – Requiring good design
- DM14 - General development criteria
- DM16 - Alterations and extensions.

- 4.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG); Designing an Extension: A Guide for Household. Relevant extracts state:

3.4 *On houses with pitched roofs it is always best to have a matching pitched roof on the extension with the same type of tiles. All such two-storey extensions should have a pitched roof and front and other prominent single storey extensions are normally better for having pitched roofs.*

4.0 *On any house, an extension should be well designed to reflect its character. Use of matching bricks, other facing materials, and roof tiles together with appropriate doors and windows is essential if an extension is not to upset the appearance of the house or the area as a whole. Such aspects are of particular importance in specially protected areas and on listed buildings.*

5.0 *Where a two storey side extension to a house is proposed in an area of mainly detached or semi-detached housings, the Council is anxious to see that the area should not become “terraced” in character, losing the sense of openness. Residents of such a street have a right to expect that the character should be retained. Houses should not be physically or visually linked, especially at first floor level as the space between buildings is important in preserving the areas character and sense of openness. A gap of 2m between a first floor extension and the side boundary is normally required.*

5.6 *If not sensibly planned, rear extensions can have considerable impact upon your neighbour. Careful regard should be given to the outlook of your neighbours and the effect of the extension on sunlight and daylight to their dwelling. This is particularly important where the extension is along a common boundary and especially on terraces or semi-detached properties. To minimise this impact, the Borough Council limits the amount of outward projection on the extension.*

5.7 *For single storey rear extensions close to your neighbour’s common boundary, the Borough Council considers that a maximum projection of 3.0m will be allowed. A first floor extension should not exceed 1.8m (with two storey rear extensions the potential impact can be even greater). Leaving a gap to the boundary with your neighbour may offset this requirement slightly depending on the distance allowed.*

5.8 *If your neighbour’s house projects rearward of yours or already has an extension on the back, then the Borough Council may allow a rear extension to the distance of the adjacent property or extension provided the extension remains in scale and character with your property. However, if your house is set back from your neighbour’s, your ability to extend to the rear will be limited.*

6.0 *Side windows should be avoided to reduce overlooking and mutual loss of privacy, although high level windows (with an internal sill height of at least 1.65m) may be acceptable. Obscured glazing to the toilet, bathroom and landing windows would overcome the problem. Windows to other ground floor rooms may be accepted if at least 2.4m from the side boundary and a screen fence or wall may be required to protect neighbour’s privacy.*

6.1 *Windows to the rear should be at least 21m from the windows of other houses to the rear. Extensions which reduce such a distance will need to be carefully examined. It should be noted that the option of a high level window or high level rooflight as the only light and ventilation to a habitable room to overcome these problems is not normally accepted by the Council.*

7.0 *The effect on available off-road parking space is also a matter of concern to the Council. Where car parking is or could be provided in the grounds of the property the Council will try to ensure that a new extension does not take this away without a suitable alternative area being made available. The Council will seek to ensure that at least one*

retained space is suitable for the building of a garage if one does not already exist. Extensions or conversions of garages to extra accommodation, which reduce available parking space and increase parking on roads are not likely to be accepted. Nor is the provision of all car parking in the front garden a suitable alternative as the position is unlikely to be suitable for a garage and will create a poor appearance in the streetscene.

7.1 The addition of an extra bedroom may require extra car parking space to be provided so that additional cars from a larger family now or in the future can park off the road.

5. LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 Two letters of objection have been received from occupants of properties to the rear of the application site which, in relation to the proposals as originally submitted, say in summary:

- *This alteration to 115 Sterling Road will overlook my garden and property and garden and will reduce the value of my property*
- *The extension is enormous and will be very close to my boundary fence*
- *All windows, doors and Juliet balcony at the rear will overlook my property causing complete loss of privacy not only in the garden but in the kitchen and dining room*
- *The extension will completely overshadow my property*
- *The extension will devalue my property*

5.2 Neighbours have been re-consulted on amendments and both the above neighbours have said that the amendments have not changed their views, as their concern was about the close proximity of the extension to their property.

5.3 More recently still two very similar but anonymous letters have been received referring to this planning application, and both saying, in summary

- *The proposed plans shows three toilets that will have an outflow to the existing manhole within the extension and outflow drain as well*
- *New soakaway in rear garden will be close to properties at rear, bearing in mind the extra roof area*
- *Landfall to the right (from the road) has a drop of 500mm and drop of 1m at the rear*

6. CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Tunstall Parish Council have said:

Tunstall Parish Council has had a number of representations in objection to this application. Some of whom are elderly or vulnerable and are unable to raise their concerns with you directly. Councillors also note there have already been 2 representations to you in addition.

At this point in Sterling Road the streetscene is very open. Bungalows in this proximity have had minimal extensions to date. This application is for a blocky loft conversion which will change the frontage of the small bungalow significantly. There is only a 1m

gap between the ground floor and the boundary of the neighbouring property. Given there are only very small gardens here, the current rear of the property is only 22m from the bungalow to the rear. This extension will reduce the garden significantly and move the rear of the house closer to the back neighbours. There have been significant concerns raised regarding overlooking at the rear due to proximity and the Juliet balcony. The street behind is slightly lower exacerbating the potential for overlooking. To the side, the proximity to the boundary would result in loss of residential amenity to the residents at 117 with the potential to block light and overshadow.

Overall the Parish Council considers the mass and scale to be inappropriate in this specific location given the surrounding properties and the one to which this property is attached.

The above comments were made on the initial proposals. I have since received further comments from the Parish Council, after they were re-consulted in regards to the amendments, and as these amendments are to materials rather than any change to the size, scale and massing, they say that their previous comments in objection still stand.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS AND PLANS

7.1 Application papers for application 21/500138/FULL

8. APPRAISAL

- 8.1 This site is situated within the defined built up area boundary of Sittingbourne and as such the principle of the development is acceptable subject to the other relevant policy considerations outlined below. The main points to consider when assessing this application are design, scale, residential amenity and visual amenity.
- 8.2 In terms of design, extract 3.4 of the SPG mentioned above states that any prominent single storey extensions are normally better for having pitched roofs. The single storey side extension has a small flat roof element but the visible pitched roof creates the illusion of a pitched roof and, although the smaller infill proposal at the rear is of flat roof design, I would not consider this to be a prominent extension. With the promise of matching materials to that of the host property and the wider streetscene, in line with extract 4.0 above, I deem the general design here acceptable. It is, in fact one of the better designed alterations recently proposed in this area, one which has been marred by extensive alterations often carried out under previous Permitted Development rights.
- 8.3 Turning to scale, and referencing extracts 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8 above, the rear extension falls very slightly outside of the 3.0m maximum extension that the Council normally allows, but the adjacent property already has a longer extension, so they will not be adversely affected. The two storey element of the rear extension is not built close to either boundary and fully meets the Council's published advice.
- 8.4 The side extension is shown to sit over 1.0m away from the shared boundary of 117 Sterling Road, with the two storey rear part is over 2.0m from this boundary, which satisfies extract 5.0 above, allowing the sense of openness between pairs of dwellings to remain.

- 8.5 There are two side windows proposed serving bathrooms so I can assume these would be obscure glazed, overcoming any concerns in regards to overlooking and loss of privacy as per extract 6.0 above.
- 8.6 Windows to the rear of the property, including the Juliet balcony would be over 21m from the closest windows of the property at the rear, in line with the guidance above in extract 6.1 of the SPG. I do not consider that this would have an unacceptable harm on any neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking.
- 8.7 The projection of the side extension will reduce parking space, but there is adequate hardstanding space for a property of this size to allow for off road parking, rendering extract 7.0 above satisfied.
- 8.8 I do not consider that the anonymous letters regarding drainages issues represent any reason to refuse the application as these matters should properly be dealt with under the Building Regulations approval process.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Overall, whilst this is an ambitious set of extensions, and I can appreciate the concerns of neighbours, it has been done in such a way that it meets all the normal standards that the Council has long expected. I do not see any significant harm arising to the amenities of neighbours despite the slightly sloping ground involved, or to the character of the area; nor do I consider that the Council could successfully defend an appeal here. This proposal essentially follows the guidance as set out in the Council's own Supplementary Planning Guidance, and I feel it appropriate to recommend this application for approval.

10. RECOMMENDATION – Grant

CONDITIONS

- (1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the permission is granted.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) The facing materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the proposed works hereby permitted shall match those on the existing building in terms of type, colour and texture and shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with approved drawings RE/02/148.01, RE/02/148.03 and RE/02/148.04B

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity and proper planning.

The Council's approach to the application

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), February 2019 the Council takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions. We work with applicants/agents in a positive and creative way by offering a pre-application advice service, where possible, suggesting solutions to secure a successful outcome and as appropriate, updating applicants / agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.

The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the Committee and promote the application.

NB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.
The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.

