

REYDON PARISH COUNCIL

PLANNING REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2023

Applications

DC/23/3269/LBC: Tudor Cottage, 43 Wangford Road

To convert an existing attached woodstore into a utility / shower room.

This is a revised application, following the refusal of the previous application DC/23/2083/LBC. The ground for refusal was the proposed insertion of a rooflight into the roofline of the woodstore which was felt would introduce a modern feature.

This revised application is identical, but omits the rooflight. The property has five bedrooms, but currently one bathroom and no utility room, so the application would provide extra facilities. The PC previously recommended approval, if the issue of the rooflight could be addressed.

PC to recommend approval

DC/23/2454/FUL: Doreen's Cottage (formerly Hilda's Cottage) 3 Bridge Road

Retrospective application – single storey and rear flat roofed extension.

This application relates to the long-running issue caused by the extension being built to drawings that, while approved (DC/21/4038/FUL), included an inaccurate measurement of the first floor element of the extension beyond the building line. The key measurement, on which the planning officer relied in approving the original application, showed the first floor projecting by 0.593m beyond the building line of the neighbouring property at No. 2, when in reality the building as constructed projects some 1.5m. This causes loss of light, amenity and privacy for No. 2.

The applicant initially sought to vary the first application (DC/22/4409/VOC), admitting that the submitted drawings were wrong, but continued with the construction. This application was eventually withdrawn.

The applicant is now seeking retrospective approval for the extension.

The PC recommended refusal of the initial application, on the ground of deviation from the building line, although due to the incorrect measurement this was not deemed sufficient justification for refusal.

The PC recommended refusal of the VOC application, on the grounds that the construction was beyond that for which permission had been granted.

Now, however, we have identified another material error in the drawings submitted with this new retrospective application. The alleyway separating Numbers 2 and 3 Bridge Road is shown as in parallel, which it is not. From the point where it moves away from the old cottage footprint it angles visibly to the left, bringing the end of the first floor extension to within 600mm (ie 2') of the neighbour's house at 2 Bridge Road. The now completed development already extends by just over 1.5 metres from the neighbour's first floor line (due to a drawing error on the original application) and the combination of these two serious mistakes makes it shockingly overbearing. The light survey thus also needs to be re-visited.

The occurrence of material errors in both the original and now the retrospective applications raises serious concerns about the professionalism of the applicant's agents and further undermines the integrity of the planning process which relies on accurate information in applications.

PC to recommend refusal for the following reasons:

The Parish Council objects to this retrospective application on the grounds of overbearing development and negative impact on the neighbouring property at No. 2 Bridge Road, resulting in loss of light, amenity and privacy.

The submitted drawings on which the original application was approved (DC/21/4038/FUL) show the first floor extension projecting beyond the building line of No. 2 by 0.593m. The case officer's report treated this as a material consideration in that it mitigated the adverse impact of the projection beyond the building line. For this reason, the Parish Council's objection to the original application because of the deviation from the building line was judged not to be sufficient justification for refusal.

However, the extension as constructed, for which the applicant is now applying for retrospective permission, has the first floor projecting some 1.5m beyond the building line of No. 2. This is clearly not what was permitted and is completely unacceptable overdevelopment, causing loss of light, amenity and privacy for No. 2. The subsequent application for a VOC (DC/22/4409/VOC, now withdrawn) clearly accepted the case that the submitted drawings were wrong and in particular that this key measurement, on which officers relied heavily in using delegated powers to approve the application, is incorrect.

Furthermore, there is another material error in the drawings submitted with this application. The alleyway between Nos 3 and 2 is incorrectly shown as straight whereas it bends significantly. This brings the first floor extension of No 3 much closer than shown to No 2 (it is only 600mm apart). This, combined with the excessive distance of the first floor extension beyond the building line of the first floor of No 2, creates the completely unacceptable loss of light, amenity and privacy of No 2.

The errors in the original and this new application represent a significant threat to the integrity of the Planning process and we expect the Local Planning Authority to reject this application and proceed forthwith with enforcement action to restore the light, amenity and privacy of No 2.

Consultation on Planning application guidance for custom and self-build housing.

ESC has prepared draft guidance for the consideration of planning applications that include custom and self-build housing. Once adopted, the document will support Local Plan policies and be used to help make decisions on planning applications. The consultation closes on 18 October.

The PC is asked to authorise the Planning Group to consider the consultation and respond as appropriate.