

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

Planning Applications Recommended For Approval

<u>APPLICATION NO:</u> P2015/0784	<u>DATE:</u> 23.12.2015
PROPOSAL:	Two storey side extension
LOCATION:	26 Poplars Avenue, Cimla, Neath
APPLICANT:	Mr Gavin Fitchett
TYPE:	Householder
WARD:	Neath South

Background information

The application has been called to Committee by Councillor Peter Rees (Neath South), who has raised issues including loss of privacy and encroachment.

Planning History:

The property has no relevant planning history.

Publicity and Responses if applicable:

5 neighbouring properties were notified by letter. In response, a letter of objection was received from an adjacent dwelling, followed by subsequent emails containing further points of objection and clarification of the original objections on grounds including: -

- The proposal is contrary to the 'Guide to Household extensions' where it is recommended a side extension should be set back by 1.5 metres, and would result in a terracing effect.
- They will be unable to carry out maintenance to the side of their property
- There will be an encroachment onto property - plan 1839/A/15/14 shows overhanging gutters.
- There will be loss of privacy, overlooking, with windows to the side elevation at rear and roof light overlooking their property.

- The plans do not show the location of the boundary wall in relation to the proposed extension.
- Subsidence may occur as this is a mining area.

Neath Town Council: No Objections.

Description of Site and its Surroundings:

The application property is a traditionally designed semi-detached dwelling with an attached garage located to the side elevation, fronting Poplars Avenue. The site is bounded by the adjoining property to the north east by a detached dwelling to the south west and the rear gardens of properties fronting Hawthorn Avenue to the north west. The slab levels of the surrounding dwellings are similar although the gardens slope away to the rear.

The application property has a single storey flat roof extension located to the side and rear and a front driveway with parking for one car and parking for a further car within the garage. Boundary treatment includes low brick walls to the front in common with the majority of dwellings in the area and fences and hedges of differing heights to the rear garden.

The dwellings within the street have a common building line fronting Poplars avenue presenting a uniform road frontage.

The street scene is predominantly characterised by semi-detached dwellings on both sides of the road, albeit interspersed with the odd detached dwelling, including the adjacent property no. 24. These properties vary in style but generally have hipped roofs some with additional gables fronting the road and bay windows of various styles. Distances between the semi-detached properties are generally uniform, these being dictated by the width of attached garages and drives. It is noted that the detached dwelling number 24 is located 1080mm off the existing boundary wall, with no windows on either side elevation of the application property of the adjacent dwelling number 24. There is also a significant separation distance between number 24 and number 22 resulting in a break in the continuity of the street scene at this point.

Brief description of proposal:

Full planning consent is sought for a two storey side extension which involves the partial demolition of the existing garage. The proposed extension consists of an open car port at ground floor level and additional bedroom space above.

The extension will have a width of 3.58 metres and a length of 6.7 metres, and will not project beyond the rear elevation of the existing dwelling. The hipped roof has an eaves height of between 5.5 metres, and - due to the sloping nature of the site to the rear – and a maximum of 6.5 metres and a ridge height of 7.7 metres (which is set down from the main ridge of the property by 0.5 metres). The extension has been set back from the main front wall of the dwelling by 900mm and from the boundary with number 24 by 150mm.

The gable end is constructed of facing brick with 3 unglazed openings facing the flank wall of number 24 at ground floor level, there are no windows facing this elevation.

A single window is located to first floor front and rear elevations, with no door to the front elevation serving the car port/parking area. The external materials will match those of the existing dwelling including facing brick render and slate to the roof.

Material Considerations:

The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are the impact upon the character and appearance of the property and wider area, the impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties and the impact on highway and pedestrian safety.

Policy Context:

It is noted that whilst the application was submitted under the Unitary Development Plan, the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan was formally adopted on 27 January 2016. Accordingly, the Development Plan for the area now comprises the Neath Port Talbot Adopted Local Development Plan (adopted January 2016) (LDP), within which the following Policies are of relevance:

- Policy SC1 Settlement Limit
- Policy BE1 Design

The Council also has approved planning guidance 'A Guide to Household Extensions'.

Principle of Residential Development

The site is located within the defined settlement limits as outlined in the emerging Local Development Plan (Policy SC1 Settlement Limits).

Development within settlement limits that is proportionate in scale and form to the role and function of the settlement as set out in the settlement hierarchy will be acceptable in principle. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to an assessment of its impact on local context.

Visual Amenity:

The external materials of the proposed extension will match those of the existing dwelling house and are therefore acceptable in respecting local context.

With regard to visual amenity the extension has been set down from the main ridge line of the host dwelling, and has been set back from the front elevation as recommended in the Authority's Household Extension Design Guide. In this regard, the design guide seeks to protect the balanced symmetrical appearance of a semi-detached pair, and notes that the easiest way to protect such symmetry is to set back a two-storey extension from the front elevation by at least 1 metre.

In this case, the extension has been set back by approximately 900mm and, therefore, is less than the minimum 1 metre recommended in the Design Guide. Nevertheless, the guide advises that extensions should appear to be subordinate to the main dwelling and not unbalance the pair, and in this regard it is considered that the design results in an appropriate sub-ordinate relationship with the main dwelling, and would not unbalance the pair of semi-detached properties. A minor breach of the recommendation in the guide is therefore not considered to result in any unacceptable harm.

The guide (and general good practice) also notes that in normal circumstances it is often desirable to maintain a distance of 1 metre between a common boundary and the wall of a two-storey extension at the side for ease of maintenance and for rear access. If any extension

has to be built close to a common boundary, then care should be taken to avoid the creation of a 'terracing effect' within the street scene.

With respect to the potential terracing effect and the relationship with the adjacent property 24 Poplars Avenue, as described above the proposed extension has been set back 900mm from the main front elevation of the dwelling and will be set off the boundary with number 24 by 150mm. This will result in a separation distance between the flank walls of the two properties of approximately 1.2 metres. In this respect, while the extension would close the existing visual gap between the properties, it is nevertheless considered that this separation distance and the subordinate scale of the proposed extension, together with the fact that the adjacent property is a detached dwelling (as opposed to another pair of semis) will ensure that there would be no unacceptable terracing effect. Furthermore, when considering the street scene in a wider context, it is also noted that there is a significant separation distance between the detached dwelling at number 24 and number 22, which further diminishes any potential for creation of a terracing effect within the wider street scene.

Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable terracing impact or have an unacceptable adverse impact on the street scene or character of the surrounding area. It would therefore accord with Policy BE1 of the Local Development Plan.

Residential Amenity:

The two storey side extension will be sited on the existing driveway of the application property, adjacent to the boundary with 24 Poplars Avenue. The width of the driveway where the extension will be sited currently measures 3.75 metres to the boundary. The agent has advised that all construction, including foundations are to be within the boundaries of the application site.

With regard to the siting of the proposal, the extension does not project further than the rear elevation of the dwelling and as noted above is set back from the front elevation of the original dwelling. It is noted that there are no windows on either the flank wall of the adjacent property or in the flank wall of the proposed extension. There are, however, openings at ground floor and concern has been expressed about the potential for views from these openings. In this regard, a condition is recommended to ensure that the opening to the rear of the car port

facing the boundary of number 24 shall be omitted and replaced by solid brickwork.

The first floor element of the extension has habitable room windows in the front and rear elevations, and separation distance between these windows and those of neighbouring properties to the front and rear properties are in excess of 21 metres and comply with the Authority's guidelines for extensions. The rear first floor window will serve a bedroom, and will be closer to the boundary with number 24 Poplars Avenue, with a roof light shown to the rear pitch of the roof.

With regard to potential overlooking at the rear, in this typical suburban situation the orientation and density of dwellings inevitably results in a degree of overlooking of neighbouring rear gardens. It is noted that the rear elevations of the proposed first floor extension and number 24 are in line therefore the location of an additional window at first floor level and a roof light in the proposed extension will potentially increase overlooking of the neighbours rear garden however, this would not be unusual in a residential context, and it is considered that the introduction of such a window in the rear elevation would not result in a greater degree of overlooking such that it would justify either a condition to obscure glaze the window or the refusal of the application on such grounds.

It is therefore considered that the proposed extension will not unacceptably impact on the residential amenity of the residents of the neighbouring properties in terms of and overbearing impact or overlooking / loss of privacy. It would therefore accord with Policy BE1 of the Local Development Plan.

Highway Safety (e.g. Parking and Access):

The property has an existing driveway and an attached garage which can accommodate one vehicle. By retaining a car port at ground floor, the proposed extension will retain two spaces serving the dwelling, and will not therefore reduce parking within the curtilage of the site. Subject to a condition requiring the car port space to be retained for the parking of vehicles unless a scheme for a replacement car parking space has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, there is no objection on parking grounds

As such it is considered that the proposed extension will not have an adverse impact on highway or pedestrian safety.

Objections:

Objections relating to the Guide to Household Extensions and overlooking have been addressed in the above report.

The amended plans (1839/A/15/14A) show the boundary wall in relation to the foundations of the proposed extension. Issues relating maintenance, property ownership encroachment and appointment of surveyors are civil issues and will need to be addressed by the land owners themselves.

Conclusion:

It is concluded that the proposed two storey side extension would not have an unacceptable detrimental impact upon visual and residential amenity or upon the character or appearance of the street scene, and there would be no adverse impact upon highway and pedestrian safety. Accordingly the proposed development would be in accordance with Policy BE 1 of the adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

Recommendation: Approval with conditions

CONDITIONS

(1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason

To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

(2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Reason

In the interests of visual amenity.

(3) Notwithstanding the submitted plans the opening shown to the rear of the car port facing the boundary of number 24 shall be omitted and replaced by solid brickwork.

Reason

In the interests of residential amenity

(4) The car parking space provided by the car port shall be retained for the parking of vehicles, and shall not be converted to residential use unless a scheme for a replacement car parking space has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be implemented prior to the commencement of any conversion work and shall provide for one additional car parking space for each space lost by any conversion work.

Reason

In the interests of highway safety

REASON FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The decision to grant planning permission has been taken in accordance with Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that, in determining a planning application the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

It is considered that the proposed two storey side extension would not have an unacceptable detrimental impact upon visual and residential amenity or upon the character or appearance of the street scene, and there would be no adverse impact upon highway and pedestrian safety. Accordingly the proposed development would be in accordance with Policy BE 1 of the adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.