

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: 230405/FUL

Address: 24 Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL

Proposals: Conversion of existing house into three self-contained flats.

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mr Hanel Nathwani

Date received: 28/03/2023

Valid from: 18/04/2023

Target Decision date: 28/09/2023, extension of time agreed on decision from 13/06/2023

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is a two-storey semi-detached dwelling located on Eldon Road. The surrounding area is considered predominantly residential, with a mix of large detached and semi-detached dwellings.

The proposal site is located within the Eldon Square Conservation Area, with the dwelling identified as a Building of Townscape Merit. A Tree Preservation Order (TPO) was placed on the Cupressus spp (Cypress) tree within the rear garden of the site on 27/07/2022 (TPO number 4/22).



Fig 1. Front of 24 Eldon Road. Site photo taken on 18/04/2023.



Fig 2. Rear of 24 Eldon Road. Site photo taken on 21/07/2023.

An unaccompanied site visit was carried out by the case officer on 18/04/2023 and 21/07/2023.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks the conversion of a single dwelling (C3 Use Class) to three self-contained flats, comprising of:

- 2-bed x2
- 1-bed x1

Plans considered:

- Supplementary Statements – 1237
- Location Plan
- 1:100 Plans as Existing – 1237/1
- 1:500 Block Plan – 1237/3/a
- ~~- 1:100 Plans as Proposed – 1237/12sk/b~~

Received on 28/03/2023

- Viability Assessment – VP23521
- ~~- Affordability Statement – VP23521~~

Received on 15/06/2023

- Affordability Statement - VP23521

Received on 13/07/2023

- ~~- Proposed Parking Bay – 1237/13~~

Received on 05/09/2023

- Proposed Parking Bay – 1237/13/a

Received on 05/09/2023

- 1:100 Plans as Proposed - 1237/12sk/c

Received on 14/09/2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

220929/TCA - Fell one Monterey cypress – Application Refused on 27/12/2022

190197/FUL - Conversion of existing house into three self-contained flats – Application Permitted on 09/09/2019

181949/OPA - Change of use from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise four self contained residential apartments comprising 1 x 2 bed flat and 3 x 1 bed flats. Prior notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 – Refused Prior Approval on 19/12/2018

920281/CLP - Use of 5 rooms in residential property for solicitors offices SECTION 64 DETERMINATION – Application Permitted on 10/07/1992

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 The following addresses were consulted by letter.

26 Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL – No response received.

22 Eldon Place, Reading, RG1 4ED – No response received.

23 Eldon Place, Reading, RG1 4ED – No response received.

22D Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL – No response received.

22C Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL – No response received.

Flat 1, 20A Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL – No response received.

Flat 2, 20A Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL – No response received.

Flat 3, 20A Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL – No response received.

Flat 4, 20A Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL – Response received on 20/04/2023

- Concerns regarding the original sash windows to the front elevation.
- Any windows to be replaced should be like-for-like and not uPVC to preserve the character of the building and the surrounding area.

Flat 5, 20A Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DL – No response received.

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee – No response received.

4.2 Internal consultees

The following is a summary of response received from internal consultees.

Reading Borough Council, Conservation & Urban Design Officer – No response received.

Reading Borough Council, Transport – Response received on 28/04/2023

- There are no Transport objections subject to conditions and informatives.

Reading Borough Council, Environmental Protection – Response received on 03/05/2023

- There are no Environmental Protection objections to this application.

Reading Borough Council, Waste Service – Response received on 10/05/2023

- No comment - we currently collect from the address. The rear collection points are accessible to the crews and appears to be in the walking distance recommended.

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment – First response received on 21/07/2023

- The application is currently not supported on tree grounds due to lack of failure to demonstrate no harm to a protected tree contrary to EN14 and the Tree Strategy.

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment – Final response received on 12/09/2023 upon review of additional information.

- The information on drawing 'Proposed Parking Bay – 1237/13/a' is satisfactory with the details of which to be secured via condition. The query regarding further tree works has not been addressed, so the standard Informative regarding tree works is necessary given the protected status of the tree.
- I can confirm that there are no Natural Environment objections to the application subject to condition.

5. EQUALITY ACT 2010

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3 Adaption to Climate Change

CC5 Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

H8 Residential Conversions

H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3 Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodland
TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

SPG/SPD

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)
Residential Conversions SPD (March 2023)
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (October 2011)

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 Land Use Principles

The application site is situated in an area made up of a diverse mix of single dwellings, HMOs and flats/apartments. The proposed scheme seeks to convert a single dwelling to three flats.

Policy H8 requires properties to be converted to be in excess of 120 square metres (gross), which this property does (204m²). Policy H8 also requires at least 25% of the units formed and, where there are 4 or fewer units at least one unit of accommodation, should be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms. 66% of the units will have minimum of 2 bedrooms.

Paragraph 6.2 of the Residential Conversions SPD states that; “Outside the areas covered by an Article 4 direction relating to small HMOs, planning permission for a conversion of a dwellinghouse to flats or to a large HMO will not normally be granted where any of the following apply:

- The proportion of houses within a 50m radius of the application site that are in use as HMOs or which have been converted to flats would exceed 50%;
- The application is for an HMO and the area falls within the 30% most deprived areas in England according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation; or
- There is other evidence of dilution or harm of a mixed and sustainable community.

In this regard, the total number of properties within the 50m radius, including the application site, has been calculated as 34. This figure does not include buildings that are not classified as a dwelling (for example buildings under Use Class E) and purpose-built flats. A total number of 12 HMOs or flat conversions within a 50m radius of the proposal site have been identified. The estimated total percentage of existing HMOs and converted flats within a 50m radius of 24 Eldon Road is 35%, the proposed conversion to flats at 24 Eldon Road would increase this to 38%. As a result, the proposed increase in HMOs and flat conversions would not exceed 50% within a 50m radius of the proposal site. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposed development would have a harmful impact upon the character of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The threshold estimate has been calculated in accordance with the guidance provided within paragraphs 6.3 to 6.9 and Appendix 3 of the Residential Conversions SPD (March 2023).

As such in principle the conversion of the property is acceptable, provided that the scheme complies with the other Policies set out within the Local Plan.

7.2 Design and the Public Realm

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, development will be assessed to ensure that it (amongst other matters):

- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*

- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping*

Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) seek to ensure that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas are conserved and enhanced. The Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal characterises Eldon Road by its tall detached or semi-detached residences faced with Bath stone. 19th Century buildings lie to the west side of Eldon Road, nearly all of which are listed. 24 Eldon Road, however, is not listed and does not appear on an 1879 map of the area. The features that contribute positively to the conservation area have been identified as follows within the Eldon Square Conservation Area and are considered relevant to this application:

- Good quality townscape;
- Prevalent use of local stone

The following features of Eldon Square Conservation Area have been identified as having a negative contribution:

- Loss of rear gardens to parking and garages

Alterations are proposed to the rear boundary wall of 24 Eldon Road. The alteration relates to the widening of the existing vehicular access to the vehicle parking space. Since the approval of application 190197 in September 2019 (see section 3 of this report for details) a section of the rear boundary wall has been removed. The plans submitted for this application indicate that the gateway is to be widened with a new brick pillar. To ensure that the rear boundary wall is suitably reinstated, details of the materials for the rear boundary wall are to be secured via condition. This is considered reasonable to ensure that the development maintains and enhances the Conservation Area and that the boundary wall is of a suitable quality.



Fig 3. Rear of 24 Eldon Road. Site photo taken on 26/03/2019.



Fig 4. Rear of 24 Eldon Road. Site photo taken on 21/07/2023.

No external alterations are proposed to the main building as part of this application. As no external alterations are proposed, the development does not alter the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area. The external appearance of 24 Eldon Road will therefore be preserved, with the special interests that contribute positively to the conservation area retained.

The development is therefore in accordance with Policies CC7, EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.3 Safeguarding Amenity

Future Occupants

Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that: *Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will only be acceptable where:*

- *There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;*
- *There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;*
- *Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and*
- *The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.*

Additionally, in the case of conversions of houses to self-contained flats:

- *The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross;*
- *At least 25% of the units formed and, where there are 4 or fewer units at least one unit of accommodation, should be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms.*

As discussed in section 7.1 of this report, this development concerns a property that has a gross internal area greater than 120m², with two of the three units proposed having 2 bedrooms.

The Residential Conversions SPD sets out a number of checklist items which provide further detail related to adopted policies CC8, H8 and H10 and the relevant ones to this proposal are as follows.

Room Sizes

The bedrooms for each flat have an area of 8m² or more, the kitchen/lounge and dining areas are also suitably sized with all rooms complying with the Nationally Described Space Standards.

Amenity Space

The private garden space is considered acceptable.

External windows

All habitable rooms would benefit from external windows.

Access to sunlight/daylight

This would be acceptable for proposed residents.

Layout/Stacking of Rooms

The Council's SPD seeks to avoid layouts which locate living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens, next to, above, or below, proposed or neighbouring bedrooms. The layout achieves this. Bedrooms and habitable rooms are stacked on top of each other, with the bathrooms also stacked on top of each other or over a communal stairway to access the flats on the upper floors.

Noise and disturbance

In terms of noise and disturbance it is considered that the flats are suitably located within 24 Eldon Road. The use of the building as a whole would remain residential and as discussed above the layout and stacking of the rooms means that any noise and disturbance between the occupants would be minimal.

Bin storage

Bin storage has been indicated on the plans to the front of the building for flat A, with bin storage located to the rear for flats B and C.

Neighbouring Residents

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity, which states that proposals are acceptable where they will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties with regard to including factors (amongst others):

- *Privacy and overlooking*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development*

- *Noise and disturbance; and*
- *Crime and safety*

With regards to the impact of the proposed development on adjoining properties 24 Eldon Road; as already discussed, the proposed use is not considered to give rise to harmful levels of noise and disturbance. No external alterations are proposed within this application, as such the development is not considered harmful to neighbouring residents with consideration given to criteria listed under Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

No other nearby occupier is considered to be significantly impinged by the proposed development in relation to any amenity consideration. It is also recognised that the proposed works would improve the quality of accommodation for future occupiers at the site.

Overall, the proposed development is not considered harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring properties or residents is therefore considered in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.4 Transport

As stated in the response from Transport Development Control, there are no in principle objections to the scheme from a transport or highways perspective. The rear collection points for bins are accessible to refuse collectors and are within suitable walking distance of the property. The details of the bin collection points have been approved by Waste Services. The cycle storage provision proposed is in line with the requirements of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011), however, details of covered cycle storage are to be secured via condition. The alterations to the vehicular access are also considered acceptable from a Transport perspective, however, a separate licence will need to be obtained to undertake any works on the public highway and access.

Subject to conditions, the development is considered in accordance with Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

7.5 Natural Environment

Further details regarding the works to the vehicular access to the rear of 24 Eldon Road were required, as removal of the boundary wall has already taken place. Upon visiting the site, the base of the TPO was covered with debris and what appeared to be construction waste. There were also signs that branches of the tree had been removed.

Due to the changes to the site from 2019 to 2023 with the removal of part of the rear boundary wall and the impact that this has had on the TPO it was considered reasonable to seek re-clarification of the works proposed to the rear boundary wall. More of the boundary wall is to be reinstated from the approval of planning permission in 2019, this is due to the change in ground levels that have occurred, particularly within the root protection area of the tree.

The plans have been amended to address concerns from the Natural Environment Team that the development would harm the root protection area of the tree. An updated proposed parking bay plan has been provided, which includes details of tree protection that needs to be in place when works are carried out to the rear boundary wall. The details of this plan will be secured as an arboricultural method statement to any approval of this application. An informative will also be attached to any approval reminding the applicant the any alterations to the TPO require permission from the LPA.

Therefore, subject to conditions, the development is considered in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed and the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

10. CONDITIONS

TL1: Time Limit (Standard)

The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

AP1: Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Plans considered:

- Location Plan
- 1:500 Block Plan – 1237/3/a

Received on 28/03/2023

- Proposed Parking Bay – 1237/13/a

Received on 05/09/2023

- 1:100 Plans as Proposed - 1237/12sk/c

Received on 14/09/2023

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

M3: Materials (As Specified)

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of this development shall be as specified on the plans and/or application forms unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy CC7, EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Boundary Wall Materials (To Be Approved)

No development shall commence beyond foundation level until a full material schedule of materials for the rear boundary wall, including type and specification of finishes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall then progress in strict accordance with the approved details and carried out in their entirety prior to first occupation unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order that the special architectural and historic interest of this Building of Townscape Merit is safeguarded in accordance with Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

C2: Construction Method Statement (To Be Submitted)

No development shall commence on site, including any works of demolition, until a site specific Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for:

- a) Space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided;
- b) Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- c) The erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site;
- d) Identification of any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction;
- e) Required wheel washing facilities on site;
- f) A scheme for recycling waste resulting from the construction works.
- g) Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes;
- h) Required measures to control the emission of dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants during demolition and construction;
- i) Provisions to be made for the control of noise coming from the site during demolition and construction;
- j) Full details of pest control measures following any demolition required. Where necessary, capping of drains/sewers and baiting arrangements.

The measures within the approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety in accordance with Policy CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

L1: Landscaping Small Scale (To Be Approved)

Prior to first occupation/use of the building hereby approved, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall specify means of treatment for hard surfaced areas, means of enclosure including mammal gaps where appropriate, specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted (including replacement trees and tree pit specifications where appropriate, and must include a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the building(s) or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

L7A: Arboricultural Method Statement (As Specified)

Tree protection measures shall be implemented as shown on Proposed Parking Bay drawing 1237/13a, received on 11 September 2023, prior to any works on site and retained until completion. Any deviation from the protection measures specified will require prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to ensure that reasonable measures are taken to safeguard trees in the interests of local amenity and the enhancement of the development itself in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

DC1: Vehicle Parking (As Specified)

The dwellings hereby permitted shall not be occupied until all vehicle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with the plans hereby approved. The spaces shall be kept available for parking at all times thereafter.

REASON: To ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities to meet the needs of future occupiers and reduce the likelihood of roadside parking which could be a danger to other road users in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

DC3: Vehicular Access (As Specified)

No dwelling/building hereby permitted shall be occupied until the vehicle access serving it has been constructed in accordance with the plans hereby approved.

REASON: In the interests of road safety in accordance with Policy TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

DC6: Cycle Parking (To Be Approved)

The dwellings hereby permitted shall not be occupied until a plan showing how 2 cycle parking spaces can satisfactorily be provided on site is submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle parking spaces shall be provided in full accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation and thereafter kept free of obstruction and retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to encourage travel by sustainable alternatives to private vehicle in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

DC20: Parking Permits 1

No residential unit hereby approved shall be occupied until the Local Planning Authority has been notified in writing of the full postal address of the unit(s) hereby approved. The notification shall be sent to the Local Planning Authority quoting the application reference specified on this Notice.

REASON: In order that the Council can update its records to ensure that parking permits are not automatically issued to the occupiers of the new residential units hereby approved, and thus ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

DC21: Parking Permits 2

Prior to any agreement being entered into for a new occupation of, or transfer of any interest in, the residential unit(s) hereby approved, the prospective occupier/transferee shall be informed that there is no automatic entitlement to a car parking permit for any existing residential parking permit schemes and future schemes on adjacent and surrounding streets. All material used for advertising or marketing the residential unit(s) for letting or sale shall make it clear to prospective tenants and occupiers that they will not be automatically entitled to a parking permit, but any application for a parking permit will be considered on its merits.

REASON: In order that the prospective occupiers are made aware of the fact that while they can submit an application they will not be automatically entitled to an on-street car parking permit. In the interests of the proper management of parking, and to ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

C1: Hours of Construction/Demolition

No construction, demolition or associated deliveries shall take place outside the hours of 0800hrs to 1800hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 0800hrs to 1300hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to protect occupiers of nearby properties from unreasonable disturbance from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

C4: No Bonfires

No materials or green waste produced as a result of the clearance of the site, demolition works or construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall be burnt on site.

REASON: In the interests of air quality, the amenity of neighbours, and to promote more sustainable approaches to waste management in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

11. INFORMATIVES

Standard Informatives

I15: Advice about TPO.d trees and trees in Conservation Areas

You are advised that no tree works are approved by virtue of this consent. Any works to trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order or to Conservation Area status will require submission of a tree works application or Section 211 Notice respectively.