

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: 221155/HOU

Address: 2 Beehive Cottages, St Johns Street, Reading, RG1 4EH

Proposals: Replacement chimney stacks (Amended Description)

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Alexander Petin

Date received: 03/08/2022

Valid from: 08/08/2022

Target Decision date: 27/01/2023, extension of time on decision agreed with agent from 03/10/2022.

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is a two-storey end terraced dwelling on St Johns Street, Redlands Ward. The surrounding area is characterised as predominately residential with 19th century terraced rows. The dwelling subject to this application is also designated a Building of Townscape Merit.

The proposal site is located within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. The Church of St. John The Evangelist is located 30m west of the proposal site and is a Grade II Listed Building. The proposal site is also directly opposite The Oval on St. Johns Road, which is also a Grade II Listed Building.



Fig 1. 2 Beehive Cottages as viewed from St Johns Road. Photo taken by case officer on 03/10/2022



Fig 2. 2 Beehive Cottages as viewed from St Johns Street - both chimney stacks pictured. Photo taken by case officer on 03/10/2022

An unaccompanied site visit was carried out on 03/10/2022.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development the replacement of two chimney stacks. The development consists of works to strengthen the structural integrity of the roof to support replacement GRP (glass reinforced plastic) chimney stacks. The GRP chimney stacks will be tiled with genuine brock slops matching the original colour, grout with matching acrylic cement.

The development originally proposed the removal of the chimney stacks due to structural concerns as the chimney breasts have been removed from the ground and first floor. The chimney stacks are now supported within the attic on concrete lintels and the roof truss ties.

The applicant was advised that the removal of the chimney stacks would not be supported by officers. 2 Beehive Cottages is within the Eldon Square Conservation Area, with chimney stacks and clay pots being identified as a feature that makes a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area within the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal. Therefore, weight is given to the retention of the chimney stacks in order to preserve

the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The applicant was therefore encouraged to seek alternative solutions that retained the chimney stacks.

Plans considered:

- Location Plan
- ~~Roof Purlin Support 22/01/02~~
- ~~Structural Calculations & Drawings/Sketches 22/01~~
- ~~Design of Gallows Brackets 22/01~~

Received on 03/08/2022

- ~~Existing Elevation 221155~~
- ~~Proposed Elevation 221155~~

Received on 08/08/2022

- Existing Elevation (Chimneys to be Removed) - 221155
- Proposed Elevation (Chimneys to be Reinstated) - 221155

Received on 01/12/2022

- Methodology Statement

Received on 07/12/2022

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 The following addresses were consulted by letter.

1 Beehive Cottages, St Johns Street, Reading, RG1 4EB - Response received on 22/08/2022

- Objects to the application with structural integrity concerns. Suggests that the chimney breasts should be reinstated.

28 St Johns Street, Reading, RG1 4EH - No response received.

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

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee - No response received.

The above addresses consulted by letter were re-consulted on 13/12/2022 following the submission of revised plans. The revisions from the original scheme are discussed in section 2 of this report.

A site notice was erected on Wednesday 10th August 2022 for a period of 21 days, expiring on Wednesday 31st August 2022. A press notice was published on Thursday 18th August 2022, expiring on Thursday 8th September 2022. No further responses have been received.

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

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.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm

CC8 Safeguarding Amenity

H9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN3 Enhancement of Conservation Areas

EN15 Air Quality

SPG/SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (Adopted March 2021)

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 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*

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation, house extension proposals are acceptable where it:

- *Respects the character and appearance of the house in terms of scale and locations.*
- *Respects the character and pattern of neighbouring properties and appearance of the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and any important existing building line.*

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, development within Conservation Areas “will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic

character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.”

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas, “Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.”

The proposed development (as revised) seeks the replacement of the existing chimney stacks with GRP replacements. This is due to concerns that the structural integrity of the building is unsafe to support the weight of the existing chimney stacks. This is described by the applicant to be due to the removal of the chimney breasts on the ground and first floors of the existing dwelling.

The original submission proposed six options (one of which being do nothing) involving the removal and retention of the chimney stacks. The option originally submitted for consideration involved the complete removal of the chimney stacks and tile over the area previously occupied by the chimney stacks. Reading Borough Council Building Control have also advised that there are concerns regarding the stability of the chimney stacks if left in situ and that there appears to be no alternative other than to remove the chimney stacks full height.

Paragraph 6.10 of the Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) details a list of features and types of development within the Conservation Area which are considered a loss to the character of the CA, one of these items is the “loss of chimney stacks and clay pots”. Upon visiting the site, it is considered that chimney stacks and clay pots are particularly prevalent along the terraced rows on St Johns Street, St Johns Road and St Johns Hill, as demonstrated within figures 3 to 5. Chimney stacks and clay pots are considered an important historic architectural feature to the Conservation Area and should be protected. Any proposed loss of chimney stacks is not considered in accordance with Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. Therefore, the applicant was advised to seek alternative solutions to the removal of the chimney stacks.

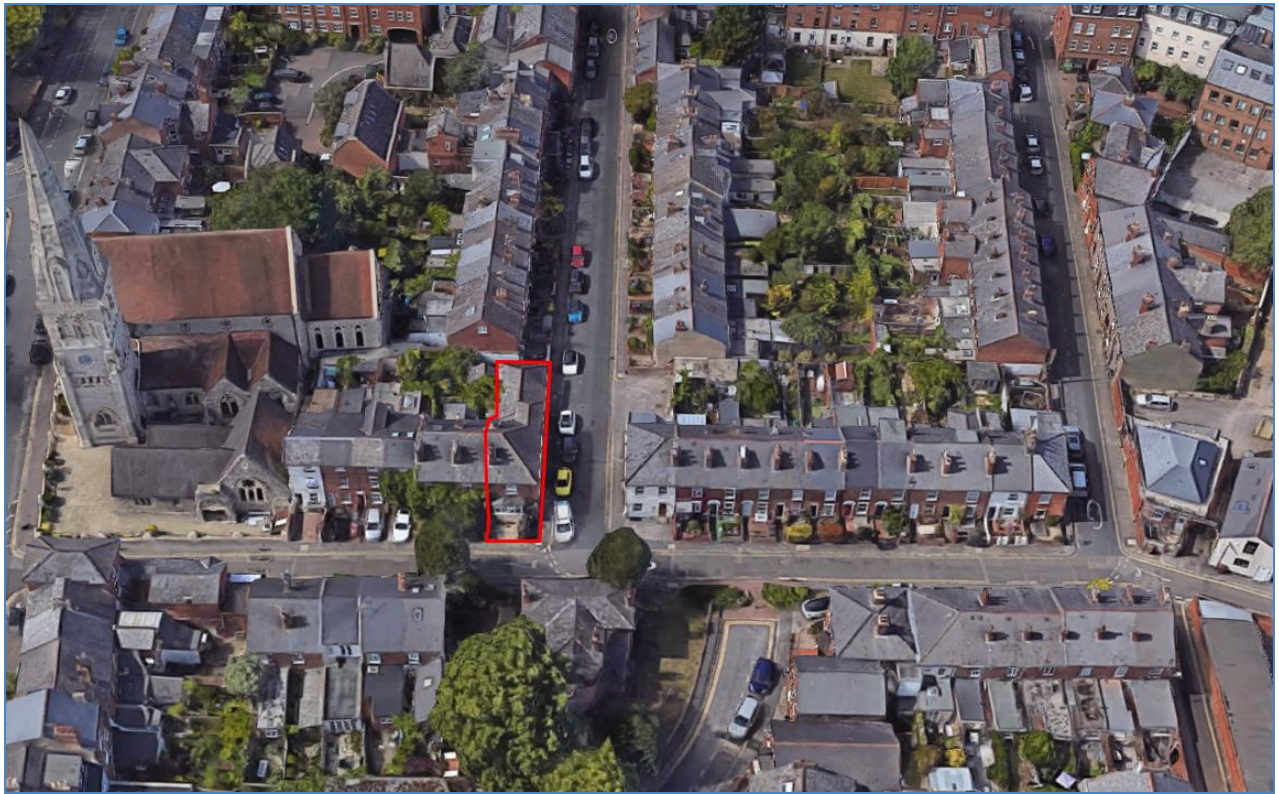


Fig 3. Google Maps image of St Johns Street, St Johns Road and St Johns Hill, proposal site outlined in red. Image retrieved from Google Maps on 09/01/2023

The proposed development was subsequently revised to the removal and replacement of the existing chimney stacks with GRP (glass reinforced plastic) replacement chimney stacks. Whilst the removal of the existing chimney stacks is considered regrettable, the replacement with GRP chimney stacks is considered an acceptable solution as this would avoid the complete removal of the chimney stacks. It has been specified within the methodology statement that the GRP chimney cases will be tiled with genuine brick slips to match the original colour, grout, with matching acrylic cement. The clay pots are to be reused and fitted with cowls to protect from precipitation and animals from getting into the pots.



Fig 4. Google Maps image of St Johns Street, St Johns Road and St Johns Hill, proposal site outlined in red. Image retrieved from Google Maps on 09/01/2023

The details of the works proposed within the revised Methodology Statement is considered acceptable and appropriate for the scale of the development proposed. In the interest of ensuring that the replacement chimney stack is acceptable in terms of appearance, it is however considered appropriate to secure the details of the materials to the replacement GRP chimney stacks to ensure that these match the existing chimney stacks as closely as possible. This is to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Overall, the proposed development is considered in accordance with Policies CC7, H9, EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The loss of the existing chimney stacks is regrettable; however, the replacement GRP chimney stacks are considered an appropriate light-weight replacement, subject to the external appearance of the replacement chimney stack being secured via condition. The reasoning behind the removal of the existing chimney stacks is considered justified, as agreed by Reading Borough Council Building Control.



Fig 5. Google Maps image of St Johns Street, St Johns Road and St Johns Hill, proposal site outlined in red. Image retrieved from Google Maps on 09/01/2023

7.2 Safeguarding Amenity

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 factors including:

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

Due to the nature of the development proposed, it is not considered that the development would result in a loss of privacy to neighbouring residents, harmful loss of light or any other criteria listed under Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Overall, the proposed development is not considered harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring properties or residents of 2 Beehive Cottages and is therefore considered in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

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:

- Location Plan

Received on 03/08/2022

- Proposed Elevation (Chimneys to be Reinstated) - 221155

Received on 01/12/2022

- Methodology Statement

Received on 07/12/2022

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.

Prior to installation of the replacement chimney stacks a full material schedule (along with samples) for the GRP (glass reinforced plastic) chimney stacks, including type and specification of finishes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details must be referenced against the approved plans, and must show the relationship with the original chimney stacks. The works shall then progress in strict accordance with the approved details 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.

11. INFORMATIVES

Standard Informatives

Pre-Commencement Conditions