

Planning Design and Access Statement

73 Mount Pleasant
Reading
RG1 2TF

(Revised Scheme)

Our Ref: 1930
Date: Jan 2023

73 Mount Pleasant

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a revised application for the Full Planning Permission for the development of 73 Mount Pleasant, Reading, RG1 2TF. This revised planning application seeks to change the use of the building from C3 (residential) to C4 (HMO) and the erection of a single storey rear extension.
- 1.2 This document has been prepared in accordance with both national and local planning policy and guidance. This document sets out the site in the context of its surroundings, sets the proposed development within the context of the relevant planning policy, describes and later examines the proposed development, providing a rationale as to why the application has been proposed in its current form and why it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in both planning and design terms.

2.0 Site & Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located along Mount Pleasant which runs north to south from London Street until it conjoins with Southampton Street (A237) at a fork in the road. The current land use along Mount Pleasant is primarily residential dwelling-houses which is interspersed by some isolated examples of commercial properties, particularly at the northern-most end of the road where it forms into Silver Street. Notable non-residential land uses are the MAPP community centre as well as the '4-bays' shop and showroom.
- 2.2 Southampton Street partially runs parallel to Mount Pleasant before conjoining further south to form Whitley Street. Southampton Street also consists predominantly of residential dwellings some of which are currently in use as HMOs, operating as student accommodation for the nearby Reading University which is located under a mile away due east. Whitley Street accommodates primarily commercial, mostly retail, properties on the ground floor with residential units above.
- 2.3 The application site itself currently accommodates a two bedroom dwelling that is in poor condition. Reading Environmental Health have previously been involved following infestation complaints made by neighbours. Forming part of a terrace of residential dwellings, the existing dwelling has been constructed of traditional red brickwork under a plain tiled roof. Internally, there is evidence of significant damp and rotting timbers after the dwelling has not been occupied for over two years.
- 2.4 In terms of accessibility, the application site is located in close proximity to services with convenience shopping facilities located a short walk away along Whitley Street. Reading Railway Station is located approximately 17 minute's walk away to the north of the site which provides regular services to London Paddington, Cardiff Central, Cheltenham Spa, Gatwick Airport, London Waterloo, Manchester Piccadilly, Swansea and the surrounding areas. Bus stops are located along Mount Pleasant, providing links to Whitley Wood, Fleet and Reading Town Centre.



Application Site

3.0 Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 As well as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Reading consists of the Local Plan (adopted 2019) which is supported by the relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The Local Plan for Reading is the document that contains the policies for how Reading will develop up to 2036, which is the end date of the plan. It identifies the amount of development that will take place, the areas and sites where development is expected to be accommodated, and where it will be restricted, and sets out policies for how planning applications will be decided.
- 3.2 The proposed development has been designed in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) as set out within the Technical Housing Standards. The proposed development has also given consideration to the relevant SPDs.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that there should be a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. Local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development. They should pro-actively look to drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industry, infrastructure and thriving local places that the UK requires.
- 3.4 Design is another integral part of the NPPF with paragraph 124 stating that the "creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve". Good design is deemed to be a key aspect of sustainable development although planning decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative.
- 3.5 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF ensures that proposed developments are designed to a high architectural specification in terms of the functionality, layout and use of effective landscaping. The NPPF also highlights the need for safe and healthy spaces for proposed and future occupants of the development.

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

- 3.6 The Reading Borough Local Plan sets out the planning policies that have been put in place in order to shape development within the borough.
- 3.7 *Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development* states that, in accordance with the NPPF, the council will work pro-actively with applicants and the policy highlights that planning law dictates that decisions must be made in accordance with the Local Plan.
- 3.8 *Policy CC3 - Adaptation to Climate Change* highlights the need for all developments to consider design measures to adapt to climate change. These include heating methods and drainage designs.
- 3.9 *Policy CC5 - Waste Minimisation and Storage* highlights the need for developments to implement measures to reduce waste during the construction and occupation stages of the project where possible.
- 3.10 *Policy CC6 - Accessibility and Intensity of Development* requires higher density developments to be located in more accessible areas such as town centre locations. It is considered that due to the size and scope of the proposed conversion, as well as the good access to public transport services as outlined in the 'Site and Surroundings' section, that the density of the development is appropriate for the location. The development is therefore deemed to be compliant with policy CC6.
- 3.11 *Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm* requires all developments to respect the character and appearance of Reading through high quality design. Due to the scale and scope of the proposed development, it is deemed that there will be minimal impact upon the character and appearance of Reading in design terms. The only discernible alteration externally will be the conversion of the roof space into habitable ac-

73 Mount Pleasant

commodation. Paragraph 4.1.31 outlines the need for developments to actively improve the area where possible in accordance with the NPPF. As the current condition of the site is poor due to the presence of damp and rotting timbers, it is deemed that the site will actively improve the area as it will constitute the best use of land available for development. With the large bulk of the refurbishment occurring internally, it is considered that the proposed development is compliant with policy CC7.

- 3.12 *Policy H1 - Provision of Housing* highlights the fact that the council, along with neighbouring councils, is working towards increasing the provision of additional housing to meet the housing need.
- 3.13 *Policy H8 - Residential Conversions* states that residential conversions to create HMOs will be assessed against the impact upon the character and amenity of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of the intensification of the activity within the area.
- 3.14 The policy outlines the requirements that developments involving residential conversions must meet in order to be deemed acceptable by the LPA. It is considered that the proposed development, by way of the scale and nature of the development will be acceptable in terms of the impact upon residential amenity, physical character and appearance of the local area, and the existing mix and sustainable community.
- 3.15 As the proposed conversion will allow for 5 occupants, the proposed HMO falls under the C4 use class as the accommodation is for under 7 people. The site is located in an area where there is an article 4 direction restricting the change of use from C3 (residential) to C4 (HMO) under the General Permitted Development Order (2015 as amended).
- 3.16 As such, the policy requirement for the proposed development is to ensure that the conversion of the existing property does not result in the proportion of HMOs within 50m of the site exceeding 25%. This has been illustrated within Figure A below.

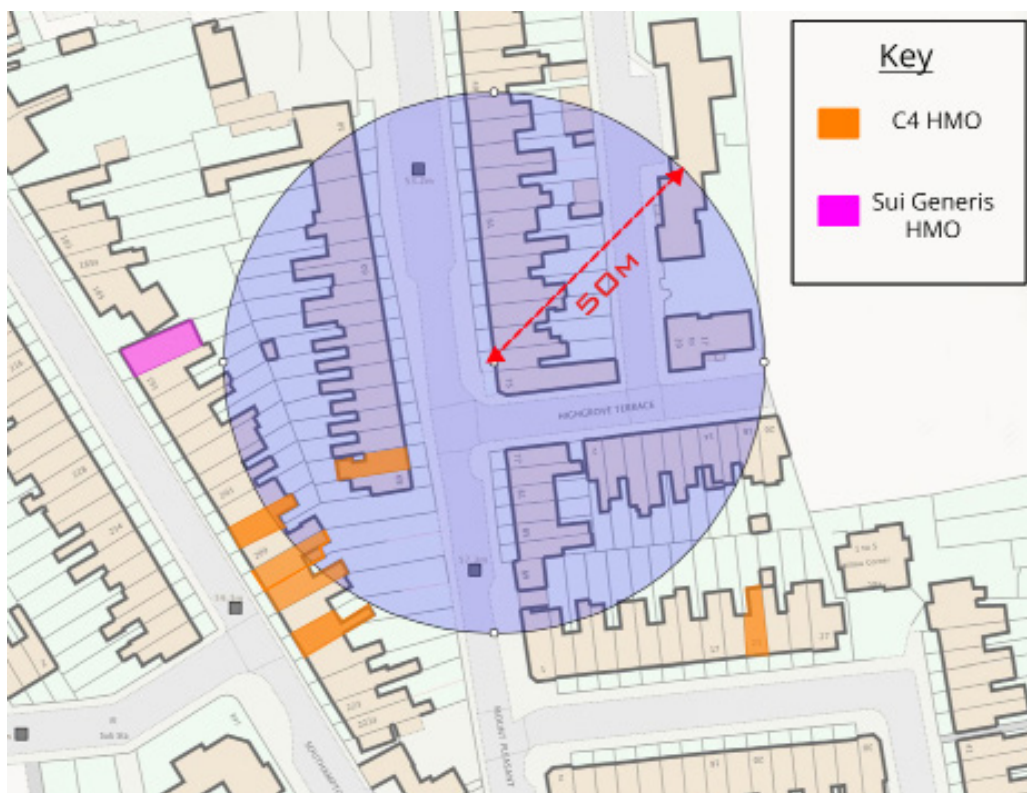


Figure A: HMOs within 50m of Application Site

3.17 Figure A demonstrates that out of a total of 64 buildings, only 4 buildings within a 50m radius from the front door of the application site are currently in use as HMOs. Therefore, within 50m of the application site, the current proportion of buildings currently in use as HMOs is 6.25%, which is well below the 25% threshold as set out within policy H8.

3.18 *Policy H9 - House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation* outlines the requirements for residential extensions to meet in order to be considered acceptable in planning and design terms. The extension will be constructed of materials found within the immediate surroundings of the site to ensure that the character and appearance of the area is not adversely impacted.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

3.19 In addition to the above, in the preparation of this planning application Reading's Supplementary Planning Documents have been consulted. The following documents have been consulted, with particular regards to the Residential Conversions SPD (2013).

- Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021)
- Residential Conversions SPD (2013)
- Sustainable Design & Construction SPD (2019)

4.0 Proposed Development

4.1 The proposed development, which is the subject of this planning application, seeks the change of use of the existing 2-bedroom dwelling-house (Class C3) to a 5 bedroom HMO (Class C4). The planning application also still seeks to introduce a single storey rear extension.

4.2 The vast majority of the built development will consist of internal refurbishment to the property. The proposed layout seeks to introduce two bedrooms at ground floor level, along with kitchen/living/dining space and a W/C, two further bedrooms and a bathroom at first floor level, and a further bedroom within the loft. Private amenity area has been proposed at the rear of the site as existing, this too will be refurbished to create a high quality HMO.

4.3 All of the proposed bedrooms exceed the requirements set out within the Nationally Described Space Standards, meaning that the proposed development will result in high-quality accommodation for prospective tenants.

5.0 Design Considerations

Use, Amount & Layout

5.1 The proposed development is for the change of use of the site from C3 (residential) to C4 (HMO). As discussed above, the majority of the proposed works will be relevant to the internal refurbishment of the property. In addition, the planning application proposes a ground floor rear extension which will extend approximately 3.5m in depth from the existing dwelling.

Height, Massing & Bulk

5.2 The proposed height of the building will not change as a result of the proposals. The ground floor rear extension is considered not to adversely increase the massing and bulk of the existing building.

5.3 The street scene will not be impacted as a result of the development as the new build aspect of the development is positioned to the rear of the building.

Outlook, Privacy, Amenity and Daylight

5.4 In accordance with local planning policy as well as the NPPF and associated guidance, due to the limited scale of the external development, it is considered that there will be a minimal impact upon the amenity and privacy of adjacent neighbours. There is a significant separation distance between the application site and the adjacent neighbours to the rear at Spring Grove. The separation distance is approximately 24

73 Mount Pleasant

metres and the respective windows serving habitable rooms are blocked by large shrubs at the rear of the application site as well as fencing along the boundaries.

- 5.5 Due to the significant separation distance, there will be no adverse impact on the daylight and amenity of the adjacent neighbours to the rear of the application site at Spring Grove. Further, due to the location and scale of the proposed extension, there will be no adverse impact upon the adjoining neighbours in terms of privacy, amenity and overlooking. It is generally accepted that there is always a degree of overlooking amongst properties that form a terrace.

Access, Parking & Accessibility

- 5.6 Access to the site will remain as existing with pedestrian access to the site coming via the main entrance fronting Mount Pleasant. No additional off-street parking has been proposed and the common practice along Mount Pleasant is parking on-street providing the user has a permit. The site has already been allocated two on-street car parking spaces. As the likely tenants will be students at the nearby Reading University, it is deemed that additional parking spaces generally wont be required.

Landscaping

- 5.7 The existing landscaping around the site will be retained and supplemented where appropriate.

Refuse

- 5.8 Sufficient space will be provided for the storage of recyclables, food waste and residual waste as follows:

- Residual Waste - 60 litres bin
- Mixed Dry Recyclables 60 litre bin
- Compostable Kitchen Waste - 7 Litres Caddy

- 5.9 Externally, bins will be stored in the back garden with access to the highway provided at the rear of the site.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 Both local and national planning policy and guidance seeks to optimise the use of urban land as well as promote sustainable forms and patterns of development. National planning policy is generally supportive of schemes that help to contribute to the government's objective of increasing the housing supply and, providing they meet necessary requirements, they should be permitted without delay.
- 6.2 The Scheme, which is the subject of this application seeks the change of use and conversion of the existing dwelling in order to accommodate a HMO. The information provided demonstrates that it complies with the Councils policies on such changes.
- 6.3 The proposals follow a design-led approach and whilst it proposes a design that is suited to the area so that the development integrates well, using similar architectural features and materials to properties in the surrounding area. It has been designed in a way in which the amenity of potential residents as well as that of the neighbouring properties, have been respected.
- 6.4 Accordingly, we believe that the proposal complies with both national and local planning policy and guidance which promotes sustainable forms and patterns of development.

