DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT **Target Date:** 05/05/22

Application No: 220155/FUL

Address: 42 Norfolk Road

Proposal: Change of use from dwellinghouse (Class C3) to house in multiple occupation (Class C4), with provision of L-shaped rear box dormer and single storey rear extension

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises a two storey mid-terraced dwelling. A two storey outrigger projects to the rear. The surrounding area is residential in character, comprising rows of terraced housing. The site is not located in a conservation area, nor is it within the setting of a listed building.

Proposal

The proposal is for the conversion of the property to a six bedroom HMO. The conversion would be facilitated by the provision of an L-shaped rear box dormer and the erection of a single storey rear extension.

Plans Considered

The agent supplied the following, received 03/02/22:

Drawing No: 3 – Site Location

Drawing No: 4 – Block Plan

Drawing No: 1 – Existing Floor and Roof Plans and Elevations

Drawing No: 2 – Proposed Floor and Roof Plans, Elevations and Section

Subsequently the agent supplied the following, received 10/03/22:

Planning Statement

On 12/04/22 the agent was advised of several significant concerns held with the proposal. The agent was invited to supply amended plans to address these concerns. No amendments have been received at the time of writing, so the decision has been taken to determine the application on the basis of the original plans.

Relevant Planning History

None.

Consultation Responses

Neighbouring owners and occupiers were consulted by letter. A site notice was displayed. Six letters of representation were received, with regard to the following:

- The is already an over-concentration of HMO's in the area
- The focus should be on retaining housing for family occupation
- The proposals would exacerbate existing on-street parking issues
- The existing alleyway to the rear is blocked by bins

Reading Borough Transport Development Control

Advised that future occupants of the HMO would not be entitled to apply for on-street parking permits, due to existing parking pressures. Advised on bicycle and bin storage. Advised that a Construction Method Statement would be required.

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.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

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

National Planning Policy Framework

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

Policy H5 – Standards for New Housing

Policy H8 – Residential Conversions

Policy H9 – House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

Policy TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR5 – Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Residential Conversions SPD (2013)

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021)

Appraisal

Principle of change of use

Under Class L, Part 3, Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, development consisting of a change of use from Class C3 to Class C4 is permitted. This change of use could be undertaken without any modification of the existing building, and does not require planning permission.

As set out in Policy H8 and the Residential Conversions SPD, the significant loss of family housing can erode the character of the area through insensitive individual conversions and the cumulative impact of physical changes to properties as a result of such a use. There

are areas of Reading Borough where the Council has needed to control the spread of HMOs, and has introduced an Article 4 direction removing the automatic right to convert a dwellinghouse to a small HMO. 42 Norfolk Road is not located within the Article 4 area, so is not subject to such a direction. Given the permitted development right currently exists, the principle of the change of use is acceptable in the limited scope of Class L. However, the overall acceptability of the proposals remains heavily-dependant on other policy considerations outlined below.

Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area

To facilitate the proposals a short single storey extension would be erected and the loft converted and extended via an L-shaped rear box dormer. Policy CC7 requires that all development be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character of the area. This is reinforced by Policy H8. The Design Guide to House Extensions SPD provides further guidance on dormer extensions.

Due to its scale and form the dormer extension would be overly dominant with respect to the existing building. The additional bulk and mass afforded by the design of the dormer creates an awkward and contrived roof form which would have a jarring effect when viewed alongside the existing roofscape, detracting from the building's original character and that of the surrounding area. The proposal is therefore of poor design, contrary to Policies CC7 and H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Design Guide to House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (2021).

Impact on neighbouring amenity

By virtue of its height and proximity to shared boundaries, significant overlooking/perception of overlooking would occur to the rear of 40 and 42 Norfolk Road and 1 Suffolk Road from the proposed dormer windows. This would cause a significant detrimental impact to the residential amenities of the occupants of 40 and 42 Norfolk Road and 1 Suffolk Road in terms of loss of privacy through overlooking. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021).

Amenity of future occupiers

Two bedrooms would be located within the converted loft space. The front bedroom would be within the existing roof space, with the only outlook/natural light to this room via two roof lights. The rear bedroom would be with the dormer extension, only served by a small window to the rear elevation. A bathroom would also be located at the second floor. As set out in Policy H5, any floor area with less than 1.5m headroom is not considered to be useable floorspace. On this basis, the internal layout would provide inadequate headroom to the front bedroom, with useable floor space severely limited. This would lead to a cramped form of accommodation for future occupiers, resulting in a poor quality internal environment harmful to their amenity. This would be exacerbated by the provision of roof lights only to the front bedroom, and a small window only to the rear bedroom, with limited outlook and natural light being afforded. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC8 and H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

The combination of these factors is tantamount to an over-intensification in the use of the property.

Transport

Given the proximate location of the site to the town centre, and the availability of local public transport routes, a car-free development can be accepted. Were permission to be

granted, the applicant would be advised that future occupants would not be eligible to apply for on-street parking permits.

Policy H8 requires that bin and cycle storage of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed be provided. In the absence of any details of bin or cycle storage, the proposal is contrary to Policy H8.

Conclusion

The proposal has been assessed and found to be unacceptable as it is contrary to the identified policy and guidance.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE