

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 220793/FUL

Address: 301 London Road, Reading, RG1 3NZ

Proposal: Proposed conversion from 2 flats to a single dwellinghouse (retrospective).

Case Officer: David Brett

Applicant: Mr K Ali

Received on: 27/05/2022

Valid from: 15/06/2022

Target Date: 10/08/2022

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The proposal site is a storey Victorian middle terraced dwelling located on London Road, East Reading. South of the proposal site is Reading Cemetery, west of the proposal site is Cemetery Junction District Centre. The proposal site is located along a busy highway that connects the centre of Reading with east of the borough and beyond, close to the A3290. The surrounding area is considered predominantly residential to the north with similarly designed Victoria terraced rows.

The proposal site is not within a Conservation Area or Listed.

Proposal

Retrospective planning permission is sought for the amalgamation of two self-contained one-bed flats (C3 Use Class) to a single dwelling (C3 Use Class). This follows the issue of a Certificate of Lawfulness for 301 London Road as two self-contained one bed flats on 15/11/2021 (see Relevant Planning History). It is stated on the application form that the use of 301 London Road as a self-contained dwelling began on 01/11/2021. No external alterations have been submitted for approval within this application.

Plans/Documents Considered

The following plans and documents have been supplied for this application:

- Land Registry
- Existing Ground Floor & Roof Plan - 01
- Existing Elevations - 02
- Existing Block Plan - 03
- Pre-Existing Ground Floor & Roof Plan - 11

Received on 27/05/2022

- Cover Letter - Proposed conversion from two flats to a single dwellinghouse.
- Planning Statement - Proposed conversion from two flats to a single dwellinghouse.

Received on 15/06/2022

Relevant Planning History

211303/CLE - Certificate of Lawfulness for Existing use for over 4 years - Ground floor used as a one bed, self-contained flat. First floor used as a one bed, self-contained flat. - Application Permitted on 15/11/2021

220578/CLP - Certificate of Lawfulness for Proposed conversion from 2 flats to 1 residence - Application Withdrawn on 27/05/2022

Officer Note: The applicant was advised to withdraw the Certificate of Lawfulness (Proposed) application and submit an application for full planning permission as the proposal would need to be assessed against Policy H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. It is acknowledged that this follows separate advice that the applicant received from the LPA that the conversion of two self-contained flats to a single dwelling would be permitted development.

Internal Consultations

Reading Borough Council, Environmental Protection - Responses received on 27/06/2022

- No comments on this application

External Consultees

299 London Road, Reading, RG1 3NZ - No response received.

303 London Road, Reading, RG1 3NZ - No response received.

22 Radstock Road, Reading, RG1 3PS - No response received.

24 Radstock Road, Reading, RG1 3PS - No response received.

26 Radstock Road, Reading, RG1 3PS - No response received.

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

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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted November 2019).

The 'National Planning Policy Framework' ('NPPF') 2021 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given).

Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2021;

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards;

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaption to Climate Change
- CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- EN15: Air Quality
- H2: Density and Mix
- H7: Protecting the Existing Housing Stock
- H8: Residential Conversions

Other documents

Sustainable Design & Construction SPD (2019)

Residential Conversions SPD (2013)

Appraisal

The main issues considered for these three separate applications are as follows:

- a) Principle of Development
- b) Residential Conversions and Existing Housing Stock
- c) Safeguarding Amenity
- d) Air Quality

- a) Principle of Development

The application seeks the loss of a residential unit and the formation of a single dwelling house. Policy H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that *“Planning permission will not be granted for any loss of residential accommodation or land unless there are exceptional circumstances. Planning permission will not be granted for a net loss in the number of residential units or gross floor area.”*

Paragraph 4.4.56 of the Reading Borough Local Plan also states that; *“(…) There may be exceptional circumstances where a loss of a limited amount of general residential would help to meet other key identified needs, for instance for a specific identified need for accommodation for vulnerable groups (see policy H6) or to reinstate a use more appropriate to the significance of a heritage asset, and this should be clearly demonstrated as part of any planning application.”*

The principle of the development proposed is acceptable, provided that the policy requirements of the Reading Borough Local Plan are satisfied, and that “exceptional circumstances” can be demonstrated.

- b) Residential Conversions and Existing Housing Stock

In this instance, great weight is given to Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan when assessing the pre-existing arrangement of 301 London Road as two self-contained one-bed flats. Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that; *“(…), 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.”*

It is acknowledged that 301 has a gross internal area of more than 120m², however, the sub-division of 301 London Road to two self-contained one-bed flats would not have been acceptable under Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, as the development resulted in the creation of two one-bed flats, and zero two-bed flats. The existing plans submitted demonstrate a two storey three-bed C3 dwelling. In this instance it is

considered that the conversion to a family dwelling is far more desirable than retaining 301 London Road as two self-contained one-bed flats, particularly as the pre-existing arrangement was not compliant with Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Therefore, exceptional circumstances are considered to have been appropriately demonstrated for the conversion of 301 London Road back to a single dwelling, and the development is in accordance with Policy H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

c) 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 various factors, including (amongst others):

- Privacy and overlooking
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of development
- Noise and disturbance
- Dust and fumes

The conversion of 301 London Road to a single dwelling is not considered to harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents along London Road, or residents to the rear along Radstock Road. It is considered that the conversion to one three-bed family dwelling is more desirable than the retention of the property as two self-contained flats. No external alterations have taken place to facilitate the conversion back to a single dwelling, with only minor internal alterations taking place such as the removal of internal doors.

The proposal was further considered against the criteria specified within Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The proposed development would not harm the amenity of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The use of 301 London Road as a family home is considered an acceptable use that would not unduly harm the living conditions of neighbouring properties as the proposed residential use is characteristic of the surrounding area.

d) Air Quality

This proposal has been considered against Reading Borough Local Plan policy EN15, as the proposal site is within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). As demonstrated in the policy, this proposal does not meet the requirements for an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) and is considered not enough of a detrimental impact air quality to warrant such an assessment due to the size and scale of the proposal.

Conclusion

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

Recommendation

GRANT

Conditions

AP1: Approved Plans

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

- Land Registry
- Existing Ground Floor & Roof Plan - 01
- Existing Block Plan - 03

Received on 27/05/2022

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.

Informatives

IF1: Positive and Proactive Working - approval

The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow permission to be granted within the agreed timescale for the decision to be issued.

IF5: Terms

Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) or planning obligation(s) attached to the permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.