

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 220471/FUL

Address: 106 Westfield Road, Reading, RG4 8HJ

Proposal: Single-storey rear extension. New parking layout, landscaping, and internal alterations to facilitate conversion from 9 residential units (Class C3) to 8 residential units (Class C3) (Amended Description)

Case Officer: David Brett

Applicant: Mr Miros Bogdantsaliev

Received on: 30/03/2022

Valid from: 11/04/2022

Target Date: 20/07/2022, extension of time on decision agreed from 06/06/2022

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The proposal site consists of 9 flats on the west side of Westfield Road, Caversham. The main building at the proposal site consists of a two storey terraced row, which was formerly Almshouses (Henry and Charlotte Villas). Vehicle parking is available to the rear of the site, with access from Westfield Road between 106-110 and 112. The site is close to a busy junction between Prospect Street, Peppard Road and Westfield Road. West of the proposal site is Caversham District Centre, whilst Westfield Park is south of the site.

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

Proposal

The proposal seeks a single storey rear extension to 106 to 110 Westfield Road, with a balcony area serving a first floor flat. A new parking layout is proposed, along with the division of the existing communal amenity area to private gardens serving each flat. The proposed development also seeks the reduction of existing residential units from 9 to 8. External alterations are also proposed to the front of 106 to 110 Westfield Road, with the insertion of two external doors serving 106 and 112. A single storey outbuilding to the rear of the site is also to be demolished.

Plans/Documents Considered

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

- ~~Location Plan - P2203-01 Rev A~~
- ~~Existing Plans & Elevations - P2203-02 Rev A~~
- ~~Proposed Plans & Elevations - P2203-03 Rev A~~
- ~~Proposed Plans - Gross Internal Areas - P2203-10~~
- ~~Planning, Design and Access Statement - 28/03/2022~~

Received on 30/03/2022

- Location Plan & Block Plan - P2203-01 Rev B

Received on 31/03/2022

- ~~Existing Plans & Elevations - P2203-02 Rev B~~

Received on 11/04/2022

- Planning, Design and Access Statement - 12/04/2022

Received on 12/04/2022

- Existing Plans & Elevations - P2203-02 Rev C
- Proposed Plans & Elevations - P2203-03 Rev B

- Proposed Plans Gross Internal Areas - P2203-10 Rev A
Received on 01/07/2022

Relevant Planning History

990484/FUL - Two storey rear extension to existing flats and provision of rooms in roof space - Application Permitted on 09/02/2001

030715/FUL - Change of use from five flats and one dwelling to ten flats to include two storey side and rear extensions. - Application Refused on 13/11/2003

190846/FUL - Two storey rear extension, and conversion of existing 6 flats (4 x 1-bed, 2 x 2-bed) to 9 flats (8 x 1-bed, 1 x 2-bed), including 2 dwellings in the loft, and associated bicycle parking, and bin storage to the rear. - Application Permitted on 24/07/2020

Internal Consultations

Reading Borough Council, Environmental Protection - Response received on 28/04/2022

- No objection on this application.

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment - Response received on 01/06/2022

- Adequate landscaping needs to be demonstrated.
- Landscaping should be secured via condition.

Reading Borough Council, Transport - Responses received on 08/06/2022 and 14/07/2022

- The increase of parking originally proposed to the rear is not considered acceptable as it would cause intensification of the access situated on a classified road.
- The parking layout as revised, which maintains the existing level of vehicle parking to the rear is acceptable. Therefore, there are no Transport objections to this application.

External Consultees

63 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JN - No response received.
59 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JN - No response received.
55 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JN - No response received.
65 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JN - No response received.
61 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JN - No response received.
57 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JN - No response received.
10 Short Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JJ - No response received.
118 Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
104 Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
106 Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
108 Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
112 Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
116 Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
110 Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
108A Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
116B Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
106A Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.
110A Westfield Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8HJ - No response received.

Caversham and District Residents Association - Response received on 23/05/2022

- *“CADRA welcome the reduction in scale of the proposed rear extensions to this terrace which is far more appropriate to this tight knit backland area. We would question the choice of material (render) for the extensions however and would suggest that well detailed brick to match the existing building might be more appropriate.”*

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
- EN9: Provision of Open Space
- EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
- EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodlands
- EN15: Air Quality
- EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
- H7: Protecting the Existing Housing Stock
- H8: Residential Conversions
- H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
- H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters

- TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Other documents

Sustainable Design & Construction SPD (2019)
Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021)
Residential Conversions SPD (2013)
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

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) Design
- d) Safeguarding Amenity
- e) Transport
- f) Private and Communal Outdoor Space and Landscaping
- g) Air Quality

- a) Principle of Development

The development seeks the loss of a residential unit from a total of 9 units at the site to 8. 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.

The existing outbuilding to the rear of 106 Westfield Road is not considered to be of any particular architectural merit. The principle of the demolition of the outbuilding is acceptable.

- b) Residential Conversions and Existing Housing Stock

In this instance, great weight is given to Policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan when assessing the existing stock of residential units at the site. Policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that; *“New build housing should be built to the following standards, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that this would render a development unviable:*

- *All new build housing outside the Central Area as defined on the Proposals Map will comply with the nationally-described space standard.”*

As existing, four of the existing residential units do not comply with the space standards as set out in Policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The proposed development seeks

the removal of flat 108a in order to reconfigure the internal space in addition to the proposed ground floor rear extensions. Therefore, the proposed development would result in the loss of one unit, but the proposed units would comply with the nationally set space standards.



Fig 1. Inside of Flat 110a as existing - bedroom, shower cubicle and w/c. Site photo taken by case officer on 30/05/2022.



Fig 2. Inside of Flat 110a as existing - kitchen, dining and living room. Site photo taken by case officer on 30/05/2022.

The proposed development also adds a more balanced mix of four 1-bed residential units at the site, and four 2-bed residential units. This exceeds the requirement for development consisting of self-contained flats to consist of at least 25% 2-bed residential units. The scheme is considered to greatly improve the standard of accommodation at the site for existing and future residents through increased floorspace for existing units, as well as an improved internal layout. Each unit will also benefit from private amenity space.

Unit	Existing Floorspace	Proposed Floorspace	Number of bedrooms (Existing)	Number of bedrooms (Proposed)
Flat 106	50m ²	65m ²	1	2
Flat 108	24m ²	39m ²	1	1
Flat 108a	30m ²	Removed	1	0
Flat 110	24m ²	37m ²	1	1
Flat 110a	29m ²	56m ²	1	2
Flat 112	51m ²	63m ²	1	2
Flat 114	74m ²	74m ²	2	2
Flat 116a	49m ²	49m ²	1	1
Flat 116b	48m ²	48m ²	1	1

Therefore, exceptional circumstances are considered to have been appropriately demonstrated for the benefits of the scheme in providing residential units that meet

nationally set space standards outweigh the harm lost due to the loss of a single residential unit. The proposed development is therefore considered in accordance with Policies H5 and H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

c) Design

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires all development to be of high-quality design and maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In this specific case, this concerns the following components:

- Layout
- Landscape
- Density and mix
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials

The proposed single storey rear extension extends the full width of 106 to 110 Westfield Road and has a depth of 4.3m from the rear wall of the existing building. The rear extension features a flat roof, with a roof terrace serving flat 110a at the first floor. The maximum height of the rear extension is 3.25m and has staggered height from 110 to 106 due to the change in elevations from north to south. The existing slate pitched roofs to access stairs serving the first floor are to be retained and integrated into the design of the rear extension.

The materials proposed to the rear extension consist of render in a colour to match the existing building. The windows proposed consist of double-glazed uPVC windows. The existing first floor windows to the rear of 106 to 110 Westfield Road consist of a mix of which uPVC and single glazed steel frame windows. The proposed double-glazed uPVC windows to the rear extension are not considered harmful to the overall appearance of the building, particularly as these windows and the overall extension will not be visible from the street scene along Westfield Road.

The exterior walls of 106 to 110 Westfield Road consist of a mix of render and painted brick, both of which are in the same colour. The proposed render in a colour to match the existing building is considered to have a neutral impact and is an acceptable finish in this instance, again as the rear extension would not be visible from the highway.

In accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, the proposed rear extension as a whole is considered appropriate in terms of scale, architectural detailing and materials. The proposed rear extension is considered to sufficiently integrate with the overall design of 106 to 110 Westfield Road. The choice of using render in the design of the rear extension has been questioned in the consultation response received, with patterned brickwork suggested as opposed to render. This is presumable to match the patterned brickwork to the front elevation of 106 to 110 Westfield Road, however, it is considered by officers that painted render to the rear extension is appropriate in this instance as it matches the appearance of the existing rear wall.

The alterations proposed to the front elevation consist of the insertion of two external doors, serving flats 106 and 112. The proposed doors are to be uPVC, which in this instance is considered acceptable by officers as they are to replace existing uPVC windows and would match the overall fenestration to the front of 106 to 110 Westfield Road. The proposed doors to the front of 106 to 110 Westfield Road are therefore considered in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

d) 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
- Access to sunlight and daylight
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of development
- Noise and disturbance
- Dust and fumes

As discussed above, the proposed flats would meet the minimum gross internal floor area and storage requirements, with the smallest flat proposed with a floorspace of 37m². This is a significant improvement above the existing flats, most of which do not meet the minimum requirement of 37m² for a one-bed flat, notably these are flats 108, 108a, 110 and 110a which range from just 24m² to 30m².

The general layout and stacking of the proposed flats are considered acceptable, with bathrooms and kitchens to the first floor situated above non-habitable rooms at ground floor level. Kitchens and bathrooms to each respective flat all adjoin each other, for instance there is not a shower or kitchen that shares a dividing wall to the bedroom of another flat. Each habitable room at the development is either served by existing or proposed windows and therefore the level of natural light is considered acceptable in accordance with the requirements of the Residential Conversions SPD.

The proposed balcony area is not considered to result in a loss of privacy either to residents of the development, other residents along Westfield Road or along Prospect Street or Short Street. Whilst the depth of the balcony is 3.95m from the rear wall to the parapet wall, the views back to the rear of adjoining flats 106 and 112 are of views to windows serving staircases and bathrooms, which are non-habitable rooms. Therefore, there is not considered to be a loss of privacy to flats 106 and 112. It is also considered that there would not be a harmful loss of privacy or overlooking to the residential gardens serving the flats below, as the edge of the balcony is set from the walkable area of the terrace by 1m, with the screening also provided ensuring the privacy of occupants at 110a and neighbouring residents.

Whilst the proposed terrace is considered acceptable, it is considered necessary to restrict the use of the flat roof as a balcony, roof garden or similar amenity area that is not included within the proposed terrace. This is to safeguard the privacy of neighbouring residents in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to significantly improve the standard of the existing residential units at 106 to 110 Westfield Road. It is acknowledged that has been partially achieved through the loss of one residential unit, however, the benefits of providing an overall improved standard of accommodation to all units is considered to outweigh the loss of a single one-bed unit.

e) Transport

During the course of the application, the proposed level of vehicle parking to the rear has been reduced from seven vehicles to four vehicles. This is to address the view from Transport Development Control that they would not accept an increased provision of parking to the rear due to the narrow and constrained access from Westfield Road to the rear of the site. Transport Development Control advised that they were able to accept a

reduced parking provision on site due to the location of the development with good public transport and walking routes and its proximity to Caversham District Centre.

With regards to bin storage and collection; this is largely as per the previously approved scheme at the site (application reference 190846), however, it was suggested by Transport Development Control that these details be signed off by Waste Services. In the absence of a response from Waste Services regarding the proposed bin storage and collection points, the agent has agreed that these details can be addressed via condition to any approval of this application. It is considered by officers that suitable bin storage and collection locations are achievable at the site, however, sign off from Waste Services regarding these locations as proposed is required.

The proposed development is therefore considered in accordance with policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

f) Private and Communal Outdoor Space and Landscaping

The proposed development seeks the conversion of the existing communal amenity space to vehicle parking, cycle parking, and private amenity space to unit 106. The proposed development would result in the loss of a Cherry Tree, which is currently situated centrally within the communal amenity space. The Natural Environment Team have confirmed that the proposed development is acceptable, subject to securing details of landscaping via condition to any approval. Therefore, the proposed development is considered in accordance with policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Whilst the loss of the communal amenity space is acknowledged, each unit will benefit from private amenity space, which is considered to reflect the level of provision to neighbouring properties, particularly along 51 to 61 Prospect Street. The level of amenity space provided for each unit is therefore considered characteristic of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy H10 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

g) 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

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 & Block Plan - P2203-01 Rev B

Received on 31/03/2022

- Planning, Design and Access Statement - 12/04/2022

Received on 12/04/2022

- Proposed Plans & Elevations - P2203-03 Rev B
- Proposed Plans Gross Internal Areas - P2203-10 Rev A

Received on 01/07/2022

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.

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 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:

- 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;
- Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- The erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site;
- Identification of any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction;
- Required wheel washing facilities on site;
- A scheme for recycling waste resulting from the construction works.
- Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes;
- Required measures to control the emission of dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants during demolition and construction;
- Provisions to be made for the control of noise coming from the site during demolition and construction;
- 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.

PD5: Use of Roof Restricted

The roof area of the single storey rear extension hereby permitted, excluding the approved roof terrace, shall not be used as a balcony, roof garden or similar amenity area without the grant of further specific planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy CC8 and H9 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.

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.

DC1: Vehicle Parking (As Specified)

The dwelling(s)/building(s) hereby permitted shall not be occupied until all vehicle parking space(s) have been provided in accordance with the plans hereby approved. The space(s) 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.

DC7: Refuse and Recycling (To Be Approved)

Notwithstanding the approved drawings, the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or the approved use commence, whichever is the sooner, until details of refuse and recycling storage sufficient for the intended development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be fully implemented before first occupation or the use first commences, whichever is the sooner, and the areas of land so provided shall not be used for any purposes other than the storage (prior to disposal) or the collection of refuse and recycling and shall be thereafter retained and maintained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of general amenity, to ensure convenience of arrangements for refuse and recycling storage and collection and to ensure that no obstruction is caused on the adjoining highway, in the interest of highway safety and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Informatives

Standard Informatives

I10: Noise between residential properties - sound insulation of any building

To minimise the disturbance by noise of future residential occupiers of the flats and its effect on neighbouring residents, residential accommodation must be designed and constructed or converted so as to achieve the insulation requirements set out in Building Regulations Approved Document E.