

DELEGATED HOUSEHOLDER APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Norcot

App Ref: 211984/FUL

Address: 33 Drayton Road, Reading, RG30 2PH

Proposals: Extension and alterations to ground and first floor from 3 bedroom house to form 1 x one bedroom and 1 x two bedroom apartments.

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Date received (valid from): 9 December 2021 Target Decision date: 3 February 2022

PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application site comprises a two storey 3 bedroom semi-detached dwelling. The surrounding area is residential in character, predominantly comprised of semi-detached dwellings of a similar style and design.

The proposal is for a single storey side and rear extension, to sub-divide the house into 2 flats, comprising a 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom flat and to create an additional parking space at the front of the property.



Plans considered:

Draft legal agreement or unilateral undertaking of Heads of terms letter
14 April 2022

A-1100 Rev B Existing and proposed elevations
A-1050 Rev B Existing and proposed ground and first floor plans
A-1055 Rev B Existing and proposed second floor and roof plans
As received 18 May 2022

A-1000 Rev B Site location plan and Block Plan
A-1010 Rev C Existing and proposed plan
As received 01 June 2022

CIL revised
As received 06 July 2022

Email from agent 05/08/2022 12:33 stating 'I would say it closer to 120sqm than 100 sqm'.
As received 5 August 2022

Email from agent 09/08/2022 12:01 stating 'I believe it is within the tolerance of measurement which is plus, minus 3.5 sq metre'

As received 09 August 2022

PLANNING HISTORY

No equivalent planning applications have been approved to convert neighbouring houses into flats in Drayton Road. Most proposals comprise smallscale extensions.

980264 27 Drayton Road Single storey rear extension including garage Permitted 20/03/1998

910477 28 Drayton Road Erection of single storey extension with pitched roof. Permitted 12/06/1991

210285 32 Drayton Road Hip-to-gable roof alteration and provision of rear box dormer, single storey side and rear extension Refused 27/04/2021

210869 32 Drayton Road Hip-to-gable roof alteration and provision of rear box dormer, single storey side and rear extension Refused 21/07/2021

191729 43 Drayton Road Two storey extension and alterations Permitted 20/01/2020

200111 43 Drayton Road Two storey extension and alterations Permitted 20/03/2020

900233 43 Drayton Road Side extension to existing house to form sheltered accommodation comprising 5 No studio flats, 2 No one bedroom flats & warden flat in roofs pace with G F residents common room, laundry & w.c Refused 14/02/1991

901061 43 Drayton Road Side extension to existing house and conversion to form sheltered accommodation comprising 1 studio flat and 6 one bedroom flats with warden s flat in roof space and GF common room, laundry & WC Refused 21/11/1990

CONSULTATIONS

Statutory or Internal consultations:

Natural environment – no objections subject to a small landscaping condition to secure landscaping details and the planting of a tree to replace the loss of hedge and vegetation to the front of the house.

Transport – no objections subject to conditions for parking, cycle storage and access. An informative to protect the Highways is also required.

Environmental protection – no objections subject to an informative to minimise noise disturbance by future residential occupiers of the flats and its effect on neighbouring residents.

Public consultations:

The following addresses were consulted by letter. A site notice was emailed to the agent to be displayed at the site.

3 Drayton Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2PH
8 Drayton Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2PH
40 Brisbane Road, Reading, RG30 2PE
3 Drayton Road, Reading, RG30 2PH
31 Drayton Road, Reading, RG30 2PH
35 Drayton Road, Reading, RG30 2PH
43 Drayton Road, Reading, RG30 2PH
5 Drayton Road, Reading, RG30 2PH

Six letters of representation have been received from neighbouring properties raising the following reasons: (officer comments are either provided directly in italics below, or otherwise included in the Appraisal section)

- There being no other properties on the road converted into flats.
- Lack of parking
- Size requirement of 120sqm for residential conversion Checklist 6 - *Additional information has been sought regarding the size of the property.*
- Lack of private garden Checklist 24
- Lack of sound insulation between flats Checklist 8 – *an informative could be recommended in the event of a permission being issued*
- Loss of a family house, which Reading is already lacking, need more family homes
- Out of keeping with the rest of the road homes
- Parking problems on the road
- House is described as a four bedroom house, not a three bedroom, likely to be a 2 x2 bedroom flats – *if the development is not implemented as outlined, enforcement action may be taken*
- Bin store closer to neighbouring property
- Development is overshadowing

Communication with agent

Agent was asked for clarification regarding the original property size and the date that the loft extension was built, the size of the original property and for a response to comments made by neighbours to the application. Concerns were raised about the size of the ground floor proposal and an overbearing impact on the neighbouring properties, parking provision and revisions were made. Further information was requested regarding noise insulation. The agent provided amended plans and an amended CIL form on 6 July 2022. The case officer questioned the difference in measurements provided, on 5 August the agent stated the measurements would be closer to 120sqm than 100sqm and the agent confirmed on 9 August that may be within a tolerance rather than the required sqm size, in contrast to the CIL documents provided. Efforts were made to work with the agent to provide an acceptable extension to the property however it could not be proven that the property was compliant with size requirements to convert the residential property into flats. The impact on the character of the road also had to be taken into consideration. The agent confirmed that if the application was refused they would be appealing. Delays occurred during the review of this application, additional information requesting had not been provided. It was not possible to reach an acceptable solution for the above application.

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 & GUIDANCE

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with policies in 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 current development plan is:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC2 (Sustainable Design and Construction)

CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change)

CC5 (Waste minimisation and storage)
CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)
CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)
H1 (Provision of housing)
H2 (Density and Mix)
H3 (Affordable Housing)
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 (Cycle Routes and Facilities)
EN15 (Air Quality)
EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources)
EN17 (Noise Generating Equipment)

SPG/SPD

Residential Conversions SPD (adopted November 2013))
Affordable Housing SPD (2013)
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (adopted October 2011)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted July 2011)

ASSESSMENT

Residential conversions

Proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing.

Drayton Road is in a quiet residential area with garden amenity.

Impact of conversion into flats on character of the area and change of use from a single dwelling

There are certain requirements that must be considered in the Reading Local Policy 2019. Policy H8 Residential Conversions states that conversions must be 'assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing'. 'The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;' Additionally, in the case of conversions of houses to self-contained flats: 'The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross'.

The residential conversions SPD also contains a checklist for consideration of residential properties.

The agent was unable to justify how revised figures had been attained to increase the size of the existing property to comply with the 120sqm requirement for residential conversions. On 5 August the agent stated that they believed that under new planning rules that the National planning guidelines prevail over local plans and that the 120sqm does not apply. The Reading Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and Residential Conversions Supplementary Document was adopted in November 2013. Full weight was given to this policy as a material consideration.

With regard to the principle of the proposed use, from purely a land use perspective, it is considered that a proposal to introduce two residential units would comply with the principles of Policy H1. Moreover however, the Council's policies seek to deliver appropriate residential conversions whilst maintaining a supply of family housing and protecting the character and amenity of the surrounding area. In this regard properties must be a minimum size as detailed in Policy H8: Residential Conversions of the Local Plan in order to be considered potentially suitable for conversion.

Policy H8 states that properties to be converted into flats must measure more than 120 square metres gross. The Residential Conversions SPD also states that when calculating the floor area of a property the measurement should be based on the external dimensions as at 1st July 1948 or when built (whichever is the later). The original CIL form submitted stated that the property was 106sqm, this was revised to 121.65sqm although the agent admitted that the property probably only be within a margin of the required sqm area. It is also noted that the attic room was a later addition to the property and would not have been part of the original external dimensions. Sales literature for the property online states that the size of the property is 106sqm at <https://www.purplebricks.co.uk/brochure/723834>. This includes a loft space conversion which has been converted to use as a single bedroom and en suite. These elements would not have formed part of the original dwelling when it was built and should therefore be discounted in the context of Policy H8. Without the single storey rear extension and loft conversion the property measures approximately only 88.58m² and has only 3 bedrooms.

No houses in Drayton Road have been converted into flats. It is a road that primarily consists of single family residential houses. The conversion of the property into 2 flats would therefore be considered to have a detrimental impact on the prevailing character of the street.

The property would therefore fail to meet the threshold criteria set out within Policy H8 and in Checklist Item 6 of the Residential Conversions SPD (2013). The purpose of the policy is two-fold in seeking to ensure that only properties a suitable size are converted in order to provide for an appropriate standard of residential accommodation and to maintain a supply of single family homes and also to protect the character and amenity of the surrounding area through associated issues when a large number of properties are converted to flats.

The principle of the proposed conversion is therefore considered unacceptable and is contrary to Policy H8 and the Residential Conversions SPD. The loss of a single family unit in order to provide two flats with a lower standard of accommodation that would be out of keeping with the character of the area would not outweigh the impact of development. Planning applications have been dismissed at appeal for not meeting the 120sqm requirements, such as planning application 181491 6 Mason Street.

Overintensification of use

Policy CC7 seeks that all development must be of a high quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area and should respond positively to their local context.

The constrictions and limitations of the site have resulted in plans that were submitted to address concerns regarding the size of extension required, resultant reduction in parking and the lack of privacy of the garden amenity for future residents. Revised plans addressed each individual issue but the management team considers that the plans resulted in an overdevelopment of the site by virtue of the combined nature of the works to the front of the house with a cramped parking design, the loss of the hedge and vegetation in the front garden and subdivision of the garden to the rear to provide a required amenity space. Due to the size of the plot, it has not been demonstrated that two flats can be accommodated. The development is considered to be out of keeping with the character of the street and would detrimentally impact the character of the local area, contrary to CC7, TR3 and EN12.

Stacking of rooms

Policy H8 seeks that there is not inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units.

The proposed expansion and subdivision of 33 Drayton Road would result in the siting of a bathroom above the middle bedroom on the ground floor which would result in potential disturbance for future residents. It does not comply with Policy CC8 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 or Checklist 9 of the Residential conversions SPD.

Design

Policy H9 (House Extensions) seeks that extensions should respect the character of a house and neighbouring houses in terms of scale, location, materials and design. Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development should be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. Policies H8 and Checklist Item 1 of the SPD seek that proposals for conversion should respect the physical character of the area.

The proposed design is small scale and would not have a detrimental impact on the public realm due to the 2.6m height to the eaves of a flat roof with roof lantern to the rear 1.6m width of the side extension with parapet wall and 3.3m depth of the rear single storey extension. The rear single storey extension would not be visible from the public realm. It is subservient to the existing property and would be acceptable as an extension to enlarge a 'single dwelling' on Drayton Road.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), Policy H8 and the Residential Conversions SPD seek to provide a suitable standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

Appropriate sound insulation between the flats would be achieved via the relevant building regulations requirements, a condition would be required. The stacking and layout of the kitchens is considered acceptable, however the siting of the first floor bathroom above an existing bedroom in particular given the bedroom would be located next to the kitchen could result in disturbance to future occupiers.

All habitable rooms would be served by suitable outlook and daylighting.

Impact on Neighbours

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity), H8 and the Residential Conversions SPD seek to protect the residential amenity of existing and future occupiers and EN16 (Pollution and Water resources) and EN17 (Noise Generating equipment) seeks to protect and mitigate development from pollution.

A noise informative is recommended to ensure adequate insulation between flats.

It is not considered that the intensification of the use of the property to 2 independent units or the proposed rear dormer roof extension would result in any undue harm to the amenity of surrounding properties.

Private amenity space

Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks dwellings are provided with functional private or communal amenity space. Whilst this policy does acknowledge that flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies or roof gardens.

The proposed garden will provide at least 25sqm per flat of outside space to each flat as the existing garden has been divided to provide amenity space for both flats. The local area is characterised by

properties with garden spaces, however although the proposed layout would benefit the amenity for future residents of the proposed flats, divided gardens are not characteristic within the vicinity.

Parking

Policies TR1 (Achieving the transport strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and TR5 (Cycle Routes and Facilities) of the Reading Local Plan 2019 seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

There are no objections from transport subject to conditions to demonstrate that sufficient parking, access, cycle parking and bin stores are provided. The existing parking provision provides 3 spaces which will be reduced to 2 spaces as a result of the proposed extension and sub division of the house. Plans were revised to address transport concerns regarding insufficient parking which has led to the removal of an established hedge and vegetation from the front garden which is considered to detract from the street scene. The proposed revised parking design and layout results in the loss of existing parking provision in a property with a proposed intensification of use and the loss of the hedge and vegetation in the front garden. Although the transport team had no objections to the change in layout, it is considered to detrimentally impact the character of the existing house and appearance within the public realm, contrary to CC7, TR3 and EN12.

Landscaping

Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the green network)

A small landscaping condition prior to occupation is proposed to confirm landscaping on site specifying landscaping, planting and means of enclosure. There should be no net loss of diversity on site as a result of the development and the loss of vegetation and hedge in the front garden should be compensated with revised landscaping to the front of the house and additional planting to the rear garden amenity.

S106 / CIL

The proposed development would create 1 no. additional dwelling. As per Policy H3 a s106 agreement should be secured for a contribution of 10% of the gross development value (GDV) of the development (5% when discounting the amount a registered provider would pay). Policy H3 is a key mechanism in allowing the LPA to meeting the affordable housing needs of the borough.

Therefore a contribution towards off-site affordable housing provision is required as part of the application in accordance with policy H3 and the Affordable Housing SPD under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The applicant has agreed to provide a contribution towards affordable housing which would be secured by way of a Section 106 agreement to be entered into prior to the grant of planning permission. A S106 has not been completed in this instance as the proposal has been considered unacceptable. The proposal therefore does not accord with the policy in this regard and this would form a further reason for refusal.

Conclusion

There is a failure to demonstrate that the original dwellinghouse did not have more than four or more bedrooms or measure more than 120 square metres gross floor area. The dwelling is therefore considered to be an unsuitable size for conversion to flats. The proposal would be an over-intensive use of the property and would result in loss of a family unit of accommodation which would be harmful to the mixed and sustainable character of the surrounding area. The proposal is contrary to Policy H8 of

the Reading Local Plan 2019 and the Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2013).

The constrictions and limitations of the site have resulted in plans that are considered an overdevelopment of the site by virtue of the combined nature of the works to the front of the house with a cramped parking design, the loss of the hedge and vegetation in the front garden and subdivision of the garden to the rear to provide a required amenity space. The development is considered to be out of keeping with the character of the street and would have a detrimental impact on the character of the local area, contrary to Policies CC7, TR3 and EN12.

The proposed expansion and subdivision of 33 Drayton Road would result in the siting of a bathroom above the middle bedroom on the ground floor, resulting in potential disturbance for future residents. It does not comply with Policy CC8 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 or Checklist 9 of the Council's Residential Conversions SPD.

In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough, contrary to policies CC9 and H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Council's Adopted Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2013).

RECOMMENDATION:

Refuse