

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove

App Ref: 220045/FUL

Address: 73 Mount Pleasant, Reading, RG1 2TF

Proposals: Change of use from dwellinghouse (Class C3) to 4 bedroom HMO (Class C4), including a single storey rear extension (amended description)

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mr Mustafa Ashraf

Date received: 12/01/2022

Valid from: 27/01/2022

Target Decision date: 13/05/2022, extension of time on decision agreed from 24/03/2022

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site is a two-storey middle terraced dwelling on the east side of Mount Pleasant. The surrounding area is characterised as predominately residential with Victorian terraced rows. Modern flats are located east of the proposal site along Spring Grove, with the Abbey School hockey pitch located slightly further east. Whitley Street Major Local Centre is 100m south of 73 Mount Pleasant.

An Article 4 directive is in place for 73 Mount Pleasant (amongst other properties in the vicinity), which removes normal permitted development rights to convert a house (C3 use) into a small house in multiple occupation (C4 use). This means planning permission is required to convert a house (C3) to a small house in multiple occupation (C4).



Fig 1. Front of 73 Mount Pleasant. Photo taken by case officer on 11/02/2022.

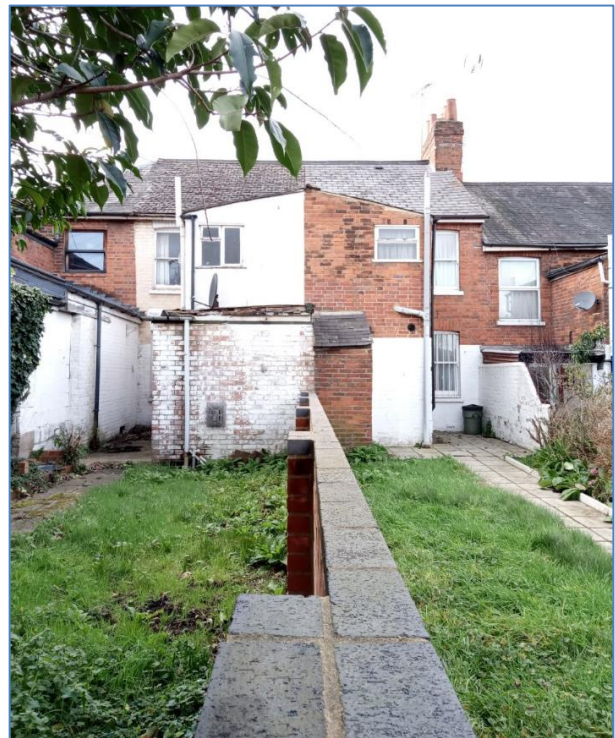


Fig 2. Rear of 73 Mount Pleasant (white building pictured left). Photo taken by case officer on 11/02/2022.

An unaccompanied site visit was performed externally on 11/02/2022.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks the change of use of 73 Mount Pleasant from a dwelling (C3 Use Class) to a small 4 bedroom HMO (Class C4). A single storey rear extension has been proposed to facilitate the change of use to a 4 occupant (as sated in paragraph 3.15 of the Planning, Design &

Access Statement) small HMO. A communal area, kitchen, W/C, and two bedrooms are proposed to the ground floor. Two bedrooms and a bathroom are proposed to the first floor.

The application initially included the conversion of the loft with box dormer to provide a fifth bedroom and a bathroom. This element has been removed from the plans during the course of the application, following officer concerns regarding the impact of the proposed box dormer on the character and appearance of the dwelling and surrounding area due to its size, scale and appearance.

Plans considered:

- Location Plan - 1930 EX10-001
- Site Plan - 1930 EX10-002
- Existing Ground Floor Plan - 1930 EX13-001
- Existing First Floor Plan - 1930 EX13-002
- Existing Roof Plan - 1930 EX13-003
- ~~Existing East & West Elevations - 1930 EX13-100~~
- Existing South Elevation - 1930 EX13-101
- Existing North Elevation - 1930 EX13-102
- ~~Proposed Ground Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-001~~
- ~~Proposed First Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-002~~
- ~~Proposed Second Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-003~~
- ~~Proposed Roof Plan - 1930 PL13-004~~
- ~~Proposed East & West Elevations - 1930 PL13-100~~
- ~~Proposed South Elevation - 1930 PL13-101~~
- ~~Proposed North Elevation - 1930 PL13-102~~
- ~~Planning, Design & Access Statement - 1930~~

Received on 12/01/2022

- ~~Planning, Design & Access Statement - 1930~~
- Existing East & West Elevations - 1930 EX13-100a
- ~~Proposed Site Plan - 1930 PL10-002~~
- ~~Proposed South Elevation - 1930 PL13-101a~~

Received on 26/01/2022

- ~~Planning, Design & Access Statement - 1930~~
- ~~Proposed East & West Elevations - 1930 PL13-100a~~

Received on 27/01/2022

- ~~Proposed Second Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-003b~~
- ~~Proposed East & West Elevations - 1930 PL13-100b~~

Received on 10/03/2022

- ~~Proposed Section 1 - 1930 PL13-103~~
- ~~Proposed Section 2 - 1930 PL13-104~~

Received on 14/03/2022

- Proposed South Elevation - 1930 PL13-101b
- Proposed North Elevation - 1930 PL13-102a
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-001b
- Proposed First Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-002b
- Proposed Second Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-003c
- Proposed Roof Plan - 1930 PL13-004b
- Proposed East & West Elevations - 1930 PL13-100c
- Proposed Site Plan - 1930 PL10-002b
- Planning, Design & Access Statement - 1930

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 *The following addresses were consulted by letter.*

71 Mount Pleasant, Reading, RG1 2TF - Response received on 22/02/2022

- An increase from two to five bedrooms is far too much. This will result in a significant increase in noise, parking and other problems for neighbouring properties. There is already plenty of student accommodation in the area - as well as all the HMOs there is also the development at the old Christian Community Action site at 79 Silver Street. Reading has a shortage of affordable family homes, not student accommodation so why not keep this as a family home?
- The proposed dormer window is very large and not at all in keeping with the local area. There are loft conversions locally but they all have small skylights - no dormer windows at all. This will result in a significant increase in overlooking of neighbouring properties and loss of privacy. It is not clear if the proposed loft conversion keeps the existing partition wall in the roof space between 71 and 73 Mount Pleasant or replaces it. (Officer note: this was omitted during the application, as detailed separately above)
- The proposed rear extension is too large and will use up well over half of the existing garden. This results in a significant loss of green space which is already in short supply in the area. Once space is allocated for refuse storage there will hardly be any garden at all. Even though the extension is single storey it will still significantly reduce light to the garden of 71 Mount Pleasant. There is already a small extension to the rear of the property - is this being kept and extended further or demolished and replaced? It appears that the proposed extension incorporates the boundary wall between 71 and 73 Mount Pleasant. It is not clear if the existing boundary wall is being kept and built on (even though it has an unsuitable foundation for this) or is being replaced.
- It is proposed that refuse is stored at the back of the property but refuse collection here is from the front of the property so how will this work?

75 Mount Pleasant, Reading, RG1 2TF - No response received.

Reading Borough Council, Environmental Protection - Response received on 03/02/2022

- We commonly receive complaints about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and about smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site of minor developments.

Reading Borough Council, Transport - Response received on 09/02/2022

- Advised of parking restrictions and the need for parking permits.
- Cycle provision needs to be demonstrated for the storage of three cycles.
- Bin storage needs to be demonstrated on the plans.
- A Construction Management Statement is required.

A site notice was sent to the agent to display at the proposal site on 31/01/2022. One further comment was received to the consultation, this is detailed below.

17 Monkley Court, Piggotts Road, Caversham, RG4 8EW - Response received on 24/02/2022

- *The council must put a stop to this kind of speculation. It provides minimal space and attracts singles, predominantly males, skewing community demographics and deteriorating the housing stock.*
- *It is also often used to house vulnerable female victims of domestic abuse in a funding fraud and subjects them to further risk.*
- *Any promises and guarantees from developers against misuses cannot be relied upon.*

5. 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.

6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
H8 Residential Conversions
H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

SPG/SPD

Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (Adopted March 2021)
Residential Conversions SPD (2013)

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 Principle of Development

Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that:

In areas covered by an Article 4 direction that restricts changes of use from Class C3 to Class C4:

- *Planning permission will not normally be granted where the proportion of HMOs (either C4 or sui generis) will result in HMOs representing 25% or more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site.*

The Residential Conversions SPD provides further detail with respect to Policy H8 and identifies that the 'tipping point is when the concentration of HMOs becomes over dominant and the community is no longer considered to be mixed and sustainable.' The SPD defines that "planning permission will not normally be granted where the proportion of HMOs will result in HMOs representing 25% or more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site" (para. 5.43).

The concentration of HMOs in the area surrounding the application site has been calculated as a percentage of the total estimated number of existing HMOs (C4 or sui generis) against the total number of residential properties, i.e. those falling with C3, C4 or sui generis HMO use. Potential data sources are those from the Environmental Protection and Nuisance Team, in particular the publicly available Register of Houses in Multiple Occupation, Council Tax records, extant (unimplemented) permissions for HMOs, and data on property websites, and data held by the Enforcement Team.

The total number of properties within the 50m radius, including the application site, has been calculated as 59. This figure does not include buildings that are not classified as a dwelling (for example buildings under Use Class E) and purpose-built flats. A total number of 6 HMOs within a 50m radius of the proposal site have been identified. The estimated total percentage of existing HMOs within a 50m radius of 73 Mount Pleasant is 10.17%, the proposed HMO at 73 Mount Pleasant would increase this to 11.86%. As a result, the proposed increase in HMOs would not exceed 25% within a 50m radius of the proposal site, therefore, the principle of the development is acceptable in accordance with Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The threshold estimate has been calculated in accordance with the guidance provided within paragraphs 5.30 to 5.45 of the Residential Conversions SPD (2013).

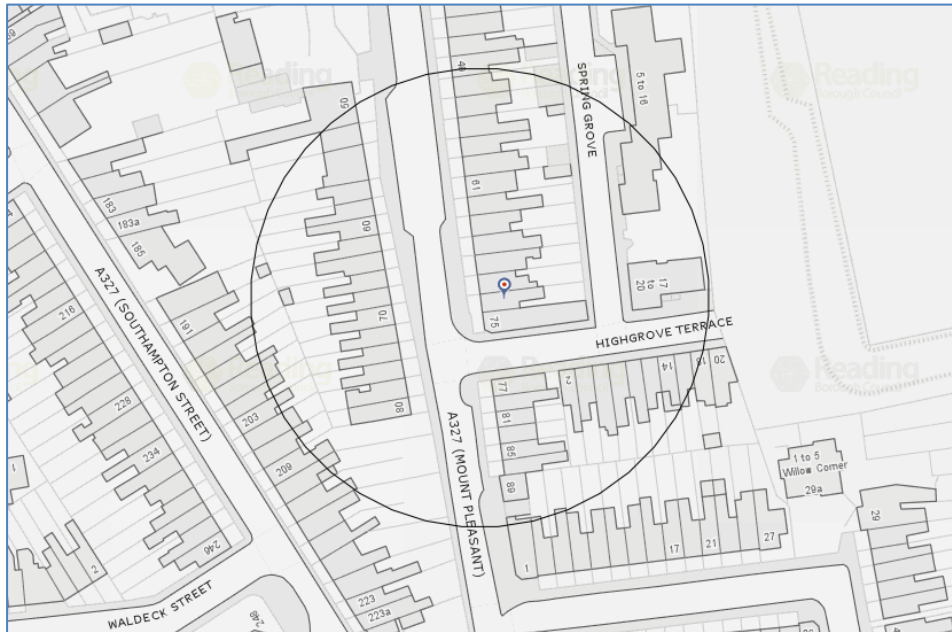


Fig 3. A 50m radius of 73 Mount Pleasant

7.2 Design and the Public Realm

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, development will be assessed to ensure that it (amongst other matters):

- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping*



Fig 4. Google Maps image of Mount Pleasant, proposal site outlined in red. Image retrieved from Google Maps on 22/03/2022

The only external alteration taking place to facilitate the conversion to a small HMO is a single storey ground floor rear extension. The rear extension will provide an open plan living room and kitchen area. The proposed rear extension has a depth of 4.15m and extends from the rear wall of the existing single storey element to the two-storey outrigger. The rear extension has a height of 2.7m, features a flat roof and is on the boundary to 71 Mount Pleasant.

The proposed ground floor rear extension is considered to sufficiently respect the existing dwelling and the surrounding area in terms of size, scale and appearance. As demonstrated in figure 4, the majority of gardens to the rear of the terraced row along Mount Pleasant feature extensive buildings within the rear garden. The proposed ground floor rear extension, despite its notable depth, is not considered so out of character with the surrounding area. The footprint of the proposed rear extension would still allow for an acceptable amount of private amenity space.

With regards to materials; the Planning, Design and Access Statement confirms that the external walls of the proposed rear extension will consist of brickwork to match the existing dwelling, and uPVC casement windows. These materials are considered acceptable and respect the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and surrounding area.

The proposed development is therefore considered in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.3 Safeguarding Amenity

Future Occupants

Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that: *Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will only be acceptable where:*

- *There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;*
- *There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;*
- *Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and*
- *The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.*

The Residential Conversions SPD sets out a number of checklist items which provide further detail related to adopted policies CC8, H8 and H10 and the relevant ones to this proposal are as follows.

Room Sizes

The SPD identifies minimum internal floorspace standards (Appendix 1) as 6.5sqm for a single bedroom and 7sqm for a kitchen. The kitchen is shown as 7m², with the bedrooms ranging from 8m² to 12m², with suitable head height.

Communal Space

There is a lounge and kitchen, which is considered acceptable for a 4 bedroom, small HMO.

Amenity Space

Despite the loss in private garden space resulting from the proposed single storey rear extension, the resulted garden is considered acceptable.

External windows

All habitable rooms would benefit from external windows. The outlook to bedroom 2 is considered to be somewhat constrained given that the window looks out onto a narrow corridor between the existing rear extension at number 75 and the proposed rear extension. The window, however, would allow for natural light and provides a limited view to the rear garden and sky.

Access to sunlight/daylight

This would be acceptable for proposed residents.

Layout/Stacking of Rooms - The Council's SPD seeks to avoid layouts which locate living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens, next to, above, or below, proposed or neighbouring bedrooms. The layout largely achieves this, and is on balance considered acceptable as it is noted that bedroom 2 shares a wall with the kitchen and the W/C.

Noise and disturbance - In terms of noise and disturbance there is no evidence to suggest that a 4 bedroom HMO would create significantly greater levels of noise than a fully occupied three bedroom family house, and in itself would not warrant refusal on this basis.

Bin storage - Bins would be stored within the rear garden with access provided to the highway at the rear of the site. This solution is considered acceptable. Many of the residents along the terraced row keep their bins within the front garden, this is also considered an acceptable solution. Regardless, there is considered to be sufficient space on site for the appropriate storage of bins.

It is recognised that the proposed development seeks a small HMO for 4 occupants and not a large HMO under the Sui Generis use class, nevertheless, it is considered pertinent to add an informative with the Council's expectations that all properties in HMO use will be properly managed and that producing a management plan is advised.

Neighbouring Residents

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 including factors (amongst others):

- *Privacy and overlooking*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development*
- *Harm to outlook*
- *Noise and disturbance*

With regards to the impact of the proposed development on 71 Mount Pleasant; an objection was received from number 71 with concerns regarding the design of the proposed dormer, this has now been removed from the plans. It is stated in the objection from number 71 that the to five bedrooms (now 4 bedrooms for 4 occupants) would give rise increased noise levels. It is considered that the any noise arising from a 4 person small HMO is unlikely to be more significant to harmful degree than that of a family home. There are no noise concerns with regards to the sue of 71 Mount Pleasant as a small HMO. With regards to parking, Transport Development Control have stated that as there has historically been no off-street parking associated with the property, this is considered a car free development. The applicant is advised that future occupants are not entitled to parking permits.

Number 71 has also raised concerns regarding the depth of the proposed ground floor rear extension. As discussed above, the proposed rear extension is considered to allow for a suitable amount of outdoor space for bin and cycle storage along with other associated uses such as hanging washing. The depth of the proposed rear extension is acknowledged, however, the proposed rear extension would not result in a harmful loss of light to habitable rooms at number 71 (see Fig 2). Due to the height of the proposed ground floor rear extension, it is not considered that there would be a harmful loss of light to the rear garden of number 71.

It is accordingly considered necessary to include a condition preventing the flat roof area to the proposed rear extension being used as a terrace, to protect neighbouring amenity with regards to overlooking and loss of privacy.

With regards to the impact of the development on number 75; the proposed development is not considered to result in a loss of privacy or harm the outlook to occupants. As already discussed, the proposed use is not considered to give rise to harmful levels of noise and disturbance.

No other nearby occupier is considered to be significantly impinged by the proposed development in relation to any amenity consideration. It is also recognised that the proposed works would improve the quality of accommodation for future occupiers at the site.

Overall, the proposed development is not considered harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring properties or residents is therefore considered in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.4 Transport

It is important to note that the advice provided by Transport Development Control was provided based on the proposed development consisting of a change of use to 5 bed small HMO, a dormer extension and rear extension. As discussed, the applicant is advised that the future occupants are not entitled to Parking Permits and that these would need to be sought from the Council. With regards to cycle storage, the rear garden is considered large enough to accommodate the storage of two bicycles (requirement reduced from 3 to 2 due to change from 5 to 4 occupants (0.5 cycles per occupant)).

With regards to bin storage, the Planning, Design and Access Statement confirms that bins will be stored within the rear garden, however, it was also noted on the site visit that the majority of residents along Mount Pleasant store their bins in the front garden. This is also an option for number 73. There are no officer concerns with this application with regards to Transport. Transport Development Control have recommended conditions and informatives concerning car park permit. Based on the revised scheme, reducing the scale of the development, it is not considered necessary to request or secure a Construction Method Statement condition for the development.

8. CONCLUSION

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

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

10. 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 - 1930 EX10-001

Received on 12/01/2022

- Proposed South Elevation - 1930 PL13-101b
- Proposed North Elevation - 1930 PL13-102a
- Proposed Ground Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-001b
- Proposed First Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-002b
- Proposed Second Floor Plan - 1930 PL13-003c
- Proposed Roof Plan - 1930 PL13-004b
- Proposed East & West Elevations - 1930 PL13-100c
- Proposed Site Plan - 1930 PL10-002b

Received on 07/04/2022

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.

M1: Materials (To Match)

The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used on the existing building.

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.

PD5: Use of Roof Restricted

The roof area of the extension hereby permitted 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.

11. INFORMATIVES

Standard Informatives

I13: Parking Permits

The occupiers of the residential unit(s) will not be automatically entitled to an on-street car parking permit. Current and new occupiers should be informed of this and be advised to find out more about parking permits on the Council's website. There is already a high level of on street

car parking in the area and the site is located close to local facilities, with frequent public transport services on nearby roads.

I27: HMO Management Plan

The Council expects all properties in HMO use to be properly managed in accordance with requirements under the Housing Acts and associated regulations. The Council publishes comprehensive information in its Houses in Multiple Occupation Management Pack, <http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/1412/HMOs-Management-Pack/pdf/HMOs-Management-Pack.pdf>. Landlords/ owners are advised to follow the advice in the pack to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Housing Acts. Landlords/ owners are advised that a property specific management plan should be drawn up. This plan should be given to all occupants/tenants, preferably as part of their tenancy agreement or contract. The operation of the property should be undertaken in accordance with the approved management plan.

A good management plan will include matters related to:

- Responsibilities and standards for the management of internal communal areas including kitchens, dining areas, living rooms and shared bathrooms;
- Responsibilities and standards for the management of common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances. These must be maintained in good and clean decorative repair, maintained in a safe and working condition and kept reasonably clear from obstruction, e.g. banisters and handrails, stair coverings, windows, lighting, gardens and yards, walls and fences, etc.;
- Responsibilities and standards for the management of external areas in terms of landscaping, maintenance and tidiness, in particular areas visible from the public highway or street. This will include matters relating to the erection of Satellite dishes and television aerials;
- Responsibilities and standards for the use and tidiness of bins, binstores, and rubbish in the use of the property along with appropriate facilities to enable the recycling of waste that meets the Council's current practices;
- Responsibilities and standards for the parking of cycles.
- An undertaking to ensure all occupants/tenants will be provided with a copy of the management plan as part of their tenancy agreement or contract and the importance of complying with its measures emphasised;

Where a condition is imposed requiring the submission and approval of a management plan (usually for larger "sui generis" HMO uses), the Local Planning Authority will expect all the above matters to be addressed

Applicants should note that information on the collection of rubbish can be found on the Council's website at:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/rubbish>

and information on the collection of bins can be found on the Council's website at:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/binchanges>