

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

App Ref: 211731/FUL

Address: 63 London Street

Proposal: Conversion of loft space to create 1 x flat (C3 use) with the addition of new front and rear dormers (amended)

Case Officer: Connie Davis

Target Decision date (agreed extension of time): 14/07/22

INTRODUCTION

The application site is located on the north-eastern side of London Road. The property is a 2 storey end of terrace located on the corner with South Street. The site is currently used as an office.

The surrounding area mainly comprises of commercial use at ground floor with residential/ office above.

The site is not Listed but is located within the Market Place/ London Street conservation area and within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the existing loft to a 1-bed residential flat. 3 new arched roof dormers are proposed on the front elevation along with another 3 on the rear elevation. The existing loft cannot be accessed from the main building and the space for decorative purposes only.

Submitted Plans and Documentation:

1125C - Site Location & Block Plans

Received 17th February 2022

1124A - Proposed Elevations

Received 4th February 2022

Air Quality Statement dated 26th November 2021
Design and Access Statement

Received 30th November 2021

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Bats) prepared by Urban tree Experts

Received 14th January 2022

Sustainability Statement

Received 2nd December 2021

1123 - Existing Elevations

1121 - Existing Plans

1122 - Proposed Plans

Application Form
Heritage Statement
CIL Form

Received 21st October 2021

PLANNING HISTORY

211649/DTP - Application for prior approval of a proposed New dwellinghouse on terrace buildings in commercial or mixed use - Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) - Schedule 2, Part 20, Class AB - Application Closed

090259/FUL - Change of use from B1 (offices) to D1 (education) - Application Withdrawn

CONSULTATIONS

Internal

Transport - No objection subject to conditions

Ecology - No objection

Environmental Health - No objection, subject to conditions

Heritage Officer - No comments received

Public

The following addresses were consulted by letter on 01/12/21:

59-65 London Street
1, 4, 5 Chapel Court, South Street

In addition, a site notice was displayed at the site.

No comments were received.

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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states at Paragraph 11 "Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development".

For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant policies are:

- | | |
|-----|--|
| CC1 | Presumption in favour of sustainable development |
| CC2 | Sustainable design and construction |
| CC3 | Adaptation to climate change |
| CC5 | Waste minimisation and storage |

CC6	Accessibility and the intensity of development
CC7	Design and the public realm
CC8	Safeguarding amenity
CC9	Securing infrastructure
EN3	Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN12	Biodiversity and the green network
EN15	Air Quality
EN16	Pollution and Water Resources
H1	Provision of housing
H2	Density and mix
H3	Affordable housing
H5	Standards for new housing
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

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

Affordable Housing (2021)
 Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
 Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)
 Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
 Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area Appraisal

APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design and impact on the surrounding Conservation Area
- Residential amenity and quality of accommodation
- Amenity Space
- Transport matters
- The Natural Environment
- Affordable Housing
- Other Matters
- Equalities impact

Principle of development

The development site is located within the urban area of Reading. As established by Local Plan Policy H1, there is a pressing need for additional housing in Reading and the surrounding area. This policy supports the principle of housing development within the borough on land which is not functional floodplain or open space and that which contributes towards social, economic and environmental wellbeing. There is an identified requirement to provide 15,847 dwellings and associated infrastructure over the plan period.

In meeting housing need, the NPPF states that LPAs should “*encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value*”. The NPPF definition of ‘previously developed

land' excludes private residential gardens in built up areas. The priority for development should be on previously developed land, in particular on vacant, under-utilised and derelict sites. The site is currently in use for commercial purposes with the loft of the building being vacant. Policy H2 of the Local Plan which states that '*With the significant need for housing in Reading and surrounding areas, it is important that efficient use is made of the land that is available to boost the delivery of new homes*'. In pure land use terms, the utilization of the loft space would allow for the provision of an additional dwelling on already brownfield land and would not require overly extensive physical works.

As such, the principle of residential development is accepted as it reuses brownfield land in an area that does already occupies residential dwellings.

Design and impact on the surrounding Conservation Area

Policy CC7 seeks to protect and enhance the character and appearance of the area and require a "*high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.*"

Policy EN3 states that "*The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*"

In addition, the NPPF (para. 64) states: "*Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions*".

Physical alterations include the addition of 3 flat arched dormers on the front and rear elevation to provide additional floor space and light to the proposed dwelling. The dormers are considered of a suitable scale in comparison to the roof. Whilst positioned slightly off-centre (on the front elevation), they are considered of an acceptable standard, subject to a condition securing materials details. Arched roof dormers are also found on other buildings within the surrounding conservation area; namely the closest building to the south. These are considered an improvement on the initial scheme that proposed flat roofed dormers.

As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policies CC7 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Residential amenity and quality of accommodation

Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers in terms of:

- Privacy and overlooking;
- Access to sunlight and daylight;
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- Harm to outlook;
- Noise and disturbance;
- Artificial lighting;
- Vibration;
- Dust and fumes;
- Smell;
- Crime and safety; or

- Wind, where the proposals involve new development of more than 8 storeys.

Policy EN16 seeks to ensure development is not harmful in terms of pollution.

Future occupiers

Policy H5 includes a number of standards for new development. The proposed dwelling would meet internal space standards for a new 1 bedroom, 1 storey dwelling, including bedroom sizes. All habitable rooms would be served by windows and therefore the dwelling would therefore be considered to provide acceptable light levels and outlook for future occupiers.

However, given the town centre location, it will need to be demonstrated that future occupiers will not be subjected to a harmful level of noise from London Road and adjoining commercial units. This will be secured via a pre-commencement condition.

An air quality assessment has also been submitted which concludes that the scheme will incorporate a ventilation strategy for the new residential property. The air intakes are proposed to be located at the rear façade of the property on the 3rd floor, and away from London Street. With the incorporation of a suitable ventilation strategy at the loft area of 63 London Street, residential users are unlikely to be exposed to poor air quality inside this property. A condition will be attached to ensure the air quality mitigation scheme shall be implemented prior to the occupation of the development. As a result, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to Policy EN15 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Existing occupiers

The site is located on the corner of London Street and South Street. The most immediate neighbour is 57 London Street. However, only front and rear facing windows are proposed and these would not overlook this neighbouring site. To the rear is 1, 4, 5 Chapel Street. However, the application site would be located at a higher level than these properties at the rear and therefore windows will not directly face onto one another. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in relation to these neighbours.

The proposed development is considered to afford a good level of accommodation for future residents whilst protecting the amenity of existing residents in accordance with policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Amenity Space

Policy H10 states that *“dwellings to be provide with functional private open space ... that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens.*

Although no specific criteria exist, the supporting text of the policy (4.4.87) states *“In the past, the Council has sought the following minimum provisions for private or communal outdoor space for each type of accommodation, and they provide a useful guide for proposals:*

Flats outside central Reading:

- *1 and 2 bedroom: 25 sq m per flat*

The proposed flat does not make provision for any amenity space. However, given the town centre location and proximity to public open space (9 minute walk to Forbury Gardens) it is considered that the proposal, on balance, taking into account other benefits of the scheme, is justifiable in relation to this policy.

Transport matters

Policy TR3 states that development should not result in a detrimental impact to the transport network.

Policy TR5 states development should promote sustainable transport measures.

The area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public car parking spaces. The site is within close proximity to the Oracle shopping centre and multi-storey car park and within 350m of Broad Street with a range of shops and services. London Street and the surrounding classified road network all have parking restrictions preventing on-street parking. The site currently has 6 parking spaces; 5 of these would but these would be retained for the existing office and one would be used as a segregated cycle/bin store.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide 1 parking space for the proposed 1 bed unit. Given the central location of the site and the extensive parking restrictions in place preventing unauthorised parking in the area, a car free development can be considered in this location. However, future occupants of the proposed unit should be aware that they would not be eligible for a resident or visitor parking permits and this will be secured via condition.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide one cycle storage space. This has been shown on the submitted plans and a compliance condition will be attached to ensure that cycle storage space is retained at all times.

Bin storage has been located at the rear of the site, access to this private car park area is via South Street which is considered acceptable and will be secured by condition.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in relation to policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

The Natural Environment

Policy EN12 states that *“on all sites, development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.”*

Ecology

Given the site does not propose rear amenity space, opportunity to enhance biodiversity on site is limited. However, it has been confirmed via a bat survey that the proposal would not result in harm to this protected specie and therefore will not result in an adverse effect on biodiversity in this regard.

Affordable Housing

In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) the proposed development, being for 1 additional dwelling, would be liable for an off-site affordable housing contribution equivalent of 10% of the GDV of the development. 5% to be provided as contribution by the applicant.

The applicant has agreed to provide a policy compliant contribution of £7,500. This will be secured via a S106 legal agreement in line with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Other Matters

Sustainability

Policy CC2 states that all minor conversions to residential are required to meet BREEAM 'Very Good' standard. However the works proposed are not considered a 'conversions to residential' due to the existing roof only being decorative without any means of access, and cannot be used even for storage. As such, it is not considered this policy would apply, but rather sustainability conditions attached that relate to new builds. Policy H5 requires sustainability measures including a 19% dwelling emissions rate improvement, and an improved water efficiency level which will be secured by condition.

CIL

The proposed development would generate a CIL liability.

Equalities Impact

When determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the 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.

CONCLUSION

As detailed above, the proposal is considered acceptable in relation to national and local level planning policy.

Recommendation: **GRANT** permission subject to a S106 legal agreement to secure an affordable housing contribution, subject to the following conditions:

All pre-commencement conditions have been agreed with the applicant's agent.

- 1) Time Limit
- 2) Approved Plans
- 3) **[Pre-commencement]** Materials to be approved
- 4) Cycle parking as specified
- 5) Refuse and recycling as specified
- 6) No parking permits
- 7) **[Pre-commencement]** Noise assessment to be submitted

8) The air quality mitigation scheme shall be implemented as approved prior to occupation of any part of the development and retained as approved at all times thereafter.

REASON: In order to protect the health of future occupants of the proposed development in accordance with Policy EN15 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

9) **[Pre-commencement]** SAP - Design

10) SAP - As built

Informatives

- 1) Terms
- 2) Building Control
- 3) Complaints about Construction
- 4) Encroachment
- 5) Positive and Proactive
- 6) Pre-Commencement Conditions
- 7) S106
- 8) CIL
- 9) Highways
- 10) Parking Permits