

Application No: 191927/FUL**Address:** 2 Mason Street**Proposal:** Various works including roof alteration, part one, part three storey rear extension (part-retrospective) and conversion to 2x1 bed flats and 1x2 bed flat**Case Officer:** Tom Hughes**Site Description and Surrounding Area**

2 Mason Street comprises a two storey end-of-terrace property with an integral garage. The ridgeline of the property sits slightly lower than its terraced neighbour. The property benefits from substantial extensions to the rear, partly incomplete and partly unauthorised. Under 041155/FUL, permission was granted for a full width rear extension of 4.45m depth, with a further projection of 2.85m at the ground floor and 1.6m at the first floor. This permission has been partially implemented, but is unauthorised as the actual total depth of the projecting part is in excess of 8m. The extensions approved under 190553/FUL have the same footprint as those currently proposed by this application. A large outbuilding, in a poor state of repair, is located to the end of the rear garden. The surrounding area is predominantly residential. The rear elevation of the flattened development at Grosvenor House, George Street is located in close proximity to the eastward application site boundary.

Proposal

The proposal is for various works including a roof alteration, a part one, part three storey rear extension (part-retrospective), and the conversion of the property to 2x1 bed and 1x2 bed flats. As above, the footprint of the proposed extensions would match that approved under 190553/FUL. To facilitate the proposal, the entire roof of the property would be raised by 0.5m. At the ground floor the extension would extend across the full width of the original property, projecting to a depth of 8.5m. At the upper floors, the extension would project to a depth of 4.7m, set 1m from the boundary with 4 Mason Street. The single storey element would have a flat roof at a height of 2.7m. A roof light would be located within the flat roof. The three storey element would have a pitched roof with a maximum height of 8.5m and a height to eaves of 5.6m. The extended part would be set down from the new ridgeline by 0.1m.

To the forward roof slope would be installed solar panels. The solar panels would cover the majority of the roof slope. Within the existing garage door would be installed a single door. The existing garage would be replaced by an 'accessway', extending through to the rear garden. The rear elevation would be recessed, containing a single door, leaving an exposed undercroft area. Bi-fold doors would be located at the ground floor to the rear elevation of the extended part. A Juliet balcony and a window would be located at the first floor, with a further window at the second floor to the rear elevation. Three roof lights would be located to each roof slope of the extended part. A further window would be located to the side elevation at the second floor. Materials have been selected to match those of the existing property.

At the ground floor would be located a one bedroom flat and an accessway. The ground floor flat would have its own independent access at the front of the property, and would have a gross internal floor area of 63m². As per Drawing No: 07 Rev. C, the rear garden would only be accessible to the occupants of the ground floor flat. A bike store would be located within the rear garden. Bin storage for each of the flats would be located to the

site frontage. The proposed accessway, replacing the existing garage, would allow access to a separate entrance to the upper floor flats. A further one bedroom flat, suitable for single occupancy, would be located at the first floor. This flat would have a gross internal floor area of 36m². A two bedroom flat with a gross internal floor area of 98m² would be located across the first and second floors.

Plans Considered

The agent supplied the following, received 04/12/19:

Planning Statement

Site Location

Drawing No: 07 - Existing Site Plan

Drawing No: 07 Rev. A - Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: 10 - Existing Floor and Roof Plans

Drawing No: 04 Rev. A - Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans

Drawing No: 05 Rev. A - Proposed Second Floor and Roof Plan

Drawing No: 11 - Existing Elevations

Drawing No: 06 - Proposed Elevations

Drawing No: 09 Rev. A - Proposed Sections

Photographs

The agent was advised on 18/02/20 that on the basis of the previously approved scheme under 190533/FUL, the proposal was subject for approval. Clarification was sought on the use of the accessway and the rear outdoor amenity area. The agent was also advised that the ground floor flat would not benefit from adequate natural light. It was recommended that a roof light be installed to allow more light to the ground floor rooms.

Subsequently the agent supplied the following, received 19/02/20:

Drawing No: 07 Rev. C - Proposed Site Plan

Drawing No: 04 Rev. C - Proposed Ground and First Floor Plans

Drawing No: 05 Rev. C - Proposed Second Floor and Roof Plans

Relevant Planning History

890633/FUL - Change of use from off licence to office for courier service - Refused 11/01/90

950553/FUL - Single storey rear extension - Refused 22/01/96

960858/FUL - First floor rear extension - Permitted 10/10/96

021440/FUL - Part one, part two side and rear extension - Refused 18/12/02

030662/FUL - Part one, part two storey side and rear extension - Permitted 07/08/03

041155/FUL - 1st floor rear extension - Permitted 12/10/04

190533/FUL - Part one, part two storey extensions, roof alteration and conversion to three flats - Permitted 04/10/19

191940/HOU - Part one, part two storey rear extension (part-retrospective) - Refused 01/07/20

Consultation Responses

Neighbouring owners and occupiers at 3 and 4 Mason Street, 40, 42, 44 and 46 George Street, and 3 and 5 Cambridge Street were consulted by letter. A site notice was displayed. No letters of representation were received.

Transport Development Control

The current application is materially similar to the scheme previously approved under 190533/FUL. The main difference includes a retained right-hand side garage, which also would serve as a direct access to the garden area. The site is located within Zone 2, Primary Core Area, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space per unit. The development is located in an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area; Zone 05R. Under the Borough's current parking standards, this proposal would generate additional pressure for parking in the area. The previous application included a condition (and informative) to restrict the future residents from being eligible for a residents parking permit. In view of this, there should be an assumption that any future occupants of the proposed flats will not be issued with resident parking or visitor permits which would be covered by condition and an informative applied. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.

The existing access to the site should be stopped up and abandoned prior to occupation of the first flat to prevent vehicles projecting over the footway. This should be covered by condition.

In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide secure cycle parking spaces for each dwelling which should be in a conveniently located, lockable, covered store. A bicycle store is proposed to be located in the rear garden, however, the plans illustrate that this is for Flat 1 only. The retained garage provides an opportunity for all flats to have secure bicycle storage which is particularly important given the site has no parking provision. However, I am happy to deal with this by condition.

Bin storage is sited at the front of the property which is a common arrangement for terraced properties.

There are no transport objections to this application subject to conditions.

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

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3 - Adaption to Climate Change

Policy CC5 - Waste Minimisation and Storage

Policy CC6 - Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EN12 - Biodiversity and the Green Network

Policy H1 - Provision of Housing

Policy H2 - Density and Mix

Policy H3 - Affordable Housing

Policy H5 - Standards for New Housing

Policy H8 - Residential Conversions

Policy H9 - House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

Policy H10 - Private and Communal Outdoor Space

Policy TR3 - Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR5 - Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Policy EN15 - Air Quality

Policy EN16 - Pollution and Water Resources

Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions (2003)

Revised Parking Standards and Design - Supplementary Planning Document (2011)

Residential Conversions - Supplementary Planning Document (2013)

Sustainable Design and Construction - Supplementary Planning Document (2011)

Affordable Housing SPD

Appraisal

Principle of development

This application follows the granting of planning permission for the conversion and extension of the property, under 190533/FUL. The current proposal is materially similar to that approved under 190553/FUL, but for slight internal alterations and the provision of 2x1 bedroom flats rather than 2x2 bedroom flats. While each application is assessed on its own individual merit, the development approved under 190533/FUL is a material consideration in the determination of this application.

As per Policy H8, proposals for residential conversions will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area. The Policy also establishes specific criteria against which the acceptability of the conversion will be deemed. The property to be converted must measure more than 120sqm gross, and the proposal must include a unit of accommodation suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms. The Residential Conversions SPD builds upon this requirement, stating *'the property to be converted should have four or more bedrooms or measure more than 120 sqm gross. When calculating the floor area of the property the measurement should be based on the external dimensions as at 1st July 1948 or when built (whichever is the later)'*.

2 Mason Street benefits from substantial, but partially unauthorised, extensions to the rear. Including all of the extended parts, the current property has a floor area in excess of 200sqm. 2 Mason Street, as originally constructed, was a modest property of approximately 80sqm. The property as built therefore had a floor area significantly below 120sqm. As per Policy H8 and the Residential Conversions SPD, 2 Mason Street is therefore not of a suitable size for conversion. Officers consider that the assessment of the proposals under 190553/FUL was not thorough enough, and that the application should have been refused as the property does not meet the basic policy size requirement for conversions. Notwithstanding, that application was permitted and forms a material consideration in the determination of this application. The provision of a two bedroom flat with the proposed conversion satisfies the policy requirement for a unit of accommodation suitable for family occupation.

Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area

As above, the property benefits from substantial extensions, some of which are unauthorised. While the proposal includes various extensions and alterations, the footprint of the proposal is the same as that approved under 190553/FUL. In its current state, the property has an unfinished and untidy appearance. While the proposed extensions would add significant bulk to the rear of the property, they would at least be more complete in appearance. The proposed extension represents an infill of existing approved extensions at the ground floor, of approximately 4m depth. The unauthorised projecting element at the first floor would be removed.

Assessed on their own individual merit, the proposed extensions are considered to be excessive, lacking in subservience to the host property. The depth of both the ground and first floor elements are contrary to the Council's guidance on house extensions, both in terms of the impact on the appearance of the existing property and the character of the surrounding area, and with regard to the impact on neighbouring residential amenity. However, extensions of the same footprint have been recently approved under 190553/FUL. While officers do not think that permission should have been granted for the extensions under 190553/FUL, this approval is a material consideration in the determination of the application.

The existing ridgeline of 2 Mason Street is slightly below that of the rest of the terraced row. The proposed slight increase in the ridgeline is not considered to be harmful to the character of the surrounding area. While the provision of solar panels to the forward roof slope would be numerous, any concerns regarding their appearance would be offset by the

environmental gain that they afford. Other external finishes of the proposal have been selected to match the appearance of those of the existing property, which is deemed to be acceptable.

The existing site frontage has an untidy appearance, used for the informal parking of up to two vehicles. As per the consultation response from Transport Development Control, this area is inadequate to support the parking of vehicles without overhanging the public highway. No details of landscaping or boundary treatment to the frontage accompany this application.

Impact on neighbours

As above, officers have concerns with regard to the impact of the proposals on neighbouring residential amenities, by virtue of the height and depth of the extensions. However, the proposed extensions would have a footprint the same as that approved under 190553/FUL, a material consideration in the determination of the application. The current proposals would not be significantly more harmful than the extensions approved under 190553/FUL.

Amenity of future occupiers

Each of the proposed flats are satisfactory in terms of their size, outlook and daylight. During the course of the application, a further roof light was sought for the ground floor flat to improve natural light, which has been provided via amended plans. While it is regrettable that not all of the flats would have access to the rear outdoor amenity space, the proximity of the site to the town centre and areas of open space alleviate any concerns in this regard.

Affordable Housing

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 towards the housing needs of Reading Borough and as such is contrary to Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the Affordable Housing SPD (2021).

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE