

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 211322/FUL

Address: 198 Tilehurst Road, Reading

Proposal: Second floor rear extension, replacement of windows and doors and refurbishment and internal alterations to 6 flats

Determination Date: Originally 08/11/2021 EOT agreed 1/2/2022

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site relates to No.198 Tilehurst Road, a three storey semi-detached building located on the north side of Tilehurst Road. The building contains 6 flats. The garden is currently overgrown and unkempt.

The surrounding area is largely residential; however, The Church of the English Martyrs is opposite the site, on the south side of Tilehurst Road.

The site is within an Air Quality Management Area.

Proposal:

This application seeks planning permission for a second floor rear extension, replacement of windows and doors and refurbishment and internal alterations to 6 flats

The materials would match those of the existing property.

Plans Considered:

Drawing No: PL-01 Location Plan

Drawing No: Proposed Block Plan PL-04

Drawing No: Existing Plans Sht 1 PL-05

Drawing No: Existing Plans Sht 2 PL-06

Drawing No: Existing Front and Rear Elevations PL-09

Received 11th August 2021

Drawing No: Proposed Second Floor Plan PL-08 Rev A

Drawing No: Proposed Sections PL-11

Received 13th September 2021

Drawing No: Proposed Plans Sht 1 PL-07 Rev B

Drawing No: Proposed Elevations PL-10 Rev B

Received 17th January 2022

Planning Statement

Received 13th September 2021

Relevant Planning History:

None.

Other nearby sites

200 Tilehurst Road:

211929/FUL - Various external alterations including two storey rear extension and provision of box dormer, to facilitate conversion from 5 residential units to 3x1 bed and 3x2 bed flats, with associated landscaping and additional vehicular access onto Walkers Place. Pending Consideration.

Consultation Responses:

Transport: No objection subject to condition in respect of bicycle parking.

Ecology: No objection.

Neighbour letters were sent to 196 and 200 Tilehurst Road and a site notice was displayed. No neighbour letters of representation received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

No pre-application advice was sought for this specific scheme prior to the submission of this 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 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) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. In this case the development plan consists of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

National Planning Practice Guidance

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 CC7 - Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EN12 - Biodiversity and The Green Network

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

Reading Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (2021)

Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (2011)

Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document (2013)

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (2019)

Appraisal

Principle

The building is in use as 6 flats. Whilst there does not appear to be any history for the conversion of building to flats, they have been registered with Council Tax since 29th February 1996. Furthermore, planning records for nearby site (196 Tilehurst 06-00027-FUL) makes reference to the use of the building as 6 flats.

Given the above, officers are satisfied that the use of the properties as flats has been satisfactorily established and there are no in principle land use concerns in respect of the proposals, and, indeed, the principle of improving the property is supported subject to other policy considerations discussed below.

Design, impact on the host dwelling, and street scene

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character. Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) states that the design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity.

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment

The National Design Guidance identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of 'Context' and it states that "well designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones." Additionally, there is specific reference to 'views inwards and outwards'.

Due to the nature of the proposals, there will be no increase in the actual footprint of the host property. The proposed extension will be relatively small scale, will be set down well below the main roof ridge and the materials will match the host property which will help aid its integration. The replacement of windows and doors will be to match.

The extension will be similar in scale and design to that of the adjoining 196 Tilehurst Road, offering a more balance appearance. Given its position at the rear of the property, the proposed extension will not be readily visible from the public domain and it is not considered to result in such an incongruous addition to result in any unacceptable harm to either the character of the host property or the wider street scene such to warrant a refusal on this basis. Indeed, refurbishment works, including replacement windows and doors, may provide some enhancement to the appearance.

Overall, in accordance with Policies CC7 and H10.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

Residential amenity is assessed against Policy CC8 which requires developments to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing properties in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; and Crime and safety.

Given the position of the proposed extension which will not project past the rear elevation of the host building, there will be no material loss of amenity to the occupiers of the adjoining No.196 Tilehurst Road.

The neighbouring property potentially most affected by the proposals is No.200 Tilehurst Road, to the west of the site. The proposed extension will be no closer to the common boundary than the existing and the roof will be hipped away to minimise the impact. Given this, the scale and position of the extension and the distance of 2m to the boundary and further to No.200 itself, this is not considered to result in such overbearing effects to warrant a refusal on this basis.

There are no privacy issues regarding the removal of a basement window on the flank elevation facing No.200. The proposed first floor window in the extension facing No.200 will be a high level window and this is not considered to result in any material loss of privacy in

itself or significantly over and above the existing windows facing No.200. This is the same in respect of the reconfiguration of windows on the flank elevation of the main building.

The proposed Juliet balconies and windows proposed on the rear elevation will face towards the rear of the site and any views of adjacent properties would be at an oblique angle. Given the distance of over 25m to the rear boundary, no loss of privacy is considered to occur in respect of the flatted development to the north.

As such in overall terms, considering all nearby residential occupiers, no significantly harmful amenity impacts will occur, subject to conditions and in compliance with Policy CC8 in particular.

Quality of residential accommodation for future occupiers

Given the existing context, it is considered that the Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) does not strictly apply, as the building has evidently for a long period of time already been in use as flats. Notwithstanding this, some of the criteria is equally applicable in terms of the quality of accommodation provided (as discussed separately below).

The existing accommodation is substandard. For current and future occupiers of the property, the proposed works will facilitate a significant internal reorganisation of the property, with the revised layout and extension going some way to improve the accommodation for future occupiers, largely in respect of flat 5 (as shown on the proposed floor plans).

The reconfiguration will result in a 2 bed flat at basement level, a change from the current 1 bed flat. Whilst the second bedroom will be small in size it will be a second bedroom to the unit, and it is recognised that the layout could be reconfigured internally without planning permission.

All habitable rooms would be served by at least one window and achieve adequate light levels (and no worse than the existing situation).

On balance and with regard to the current situation, the proposals are not considered to result in such poor quality accommodation - and over and above the current situation - to warrant a refusal on this basis.

Overall, in accordance with Policy CC8.

Impact on Parking/Highways

Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

There is existing parking to the front of the site allowing 2 cars to be accessed directly from Tilehurst Road. Whilst parking provision for the site falls below the standards recommended in the Parking Standards and Design SPD, the proposed refurbishment will not generate a higher demand for parking over and above the existing situation. Given this, there is no objection to the proposals on transport grounds. Transport Officers have requested details in respect of cycle parking, However, the application is for a small extension to existing dwelling with no increase in number of units. As such, this application is limited in its scope and does not need to consider wider issues as to how the site functions including cycle parking.

In accordance with Policies TR3 and TR5.

Ecology

Policy EN12 (Biodiversity and the Green Network) seeks that developments should retain, protect and incorporates features of biodiversity.

The proposed extension will not involve works to the main roof ridge and the Council's Ecologist has confirmed that the risk of bats being affected is minimal. Given this, there is no objection to the proposals on ecology grounds. In accordance with Policy EN12.

Affordable Housing

The proposal relates to the refurbishments of 6 existing flats. The proposed extension will be small in scale and there would be no increase in the number of units. Given this, it is considered that the proposals are excluded from the requirements of Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) and no affordable housing contribution is required in this specific instance. Accordingly, no S106 legal agreement is required either.

Other matters

Pre-commencement conditions - In line with section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended) discussions have been undertaken with the applicant regarding pre-commencement conditions. No pre-commencement conditions.

Conclusion

Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh in favour of granting planning permission subject to conditions.

Recommendation:

GRANT subject to conditions and informatives