

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove

App Ref: 211763/FUL

Address: 2 & 4 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, RG2 7PN

Proposals: Proposed part 2 storey and single storey rear extension following demolition of existing.

Case Officer: Mr David Brett

Applicant: Mr Kris Navaratnam

Date received (valid from): 27/10/2021

Target Decision date: 22/12/2021

1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal site consists of a two-storey semi-detached pair of properties located on Northumberland Avenue, Caversham. The surrounding area is considered predominantly residential with similarly designed two storey semi-detached dwellings and terraced rows.

2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue are within separate large HMOs (Sui Generis) use. The use of number 2 as a large HMO (Sui Generis) has been recently confirmed under Certificate of Lawfulness (Existing) application 210451 (see relevant history section below).

A site visit was performed on 08/12/2021.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks the erection of a ground floor rear extensions, a first floor rear extensions, and flat roof rear dormers to both 2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue. The combined development is identical to the proposal submitted under separate applications 211054 and 211056 (see section 3 of this report for details).

Internally, based on a comparison of the existing and proposed floor plans submitted, the proposals will alter No. 2 from a 5-bedroom HMO to a 6-bedroom HMO, while No. 4 will alter from 8-bedrooms to 6-bedrooms. Whereas as existing only the room in the roofspace at No. 2 has en-suite facilities, the proposals would (again based on the floor plans submitted) create en-suite facilities associated with each bedroom in both buildings.

The proposed development was originally submitted as two separate applications for 2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue respectively. The proposal has been re-submitted as a combined development under one application. With regard to the two previous applications (211054 and 211056); the agent stated in a letter accompanying these applications that; *"While separate full planning applications are submitted to each property, the building works would be carried out jointly and, as such, these applications should be considered jointly, with any approval granted conditional upon both properties being extended at the same time."*

It was explained to the agent that it is not considered that a planning condition would be sufficient in this instance to address the issue of ensuring that a development is carried out to completion simultaneously. As per [guidance on the use of planning conditions](#):

- **Conditions requiring the development to be carried out in its entirety:**
 - o *Conditions requiring a development to be carried out in its entirety will fail the test of necessity by requiring more than is needed to deal with the problem they are designed to solve. Such a condition is also likely to be difficult to enforce due to the range of external factors that can influence a decision whether or not to carry out and complete a development.*

It was therefore recommended that applications 211054 and 211056 be withdrawn and resubmitted as one planning application. Subject to approval, the proposed development as a

whole would then be secured under one plan (one red line around both proposal sites), meaning that the development would be covered under “development needs to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans” condition. Following this advice, the agent withdrew application 211054 and 211056 on 01/11/2021 and submitted the combined development for 2 & 4 Northumberland Avenue under this planning application.

Plans considered (plans with double strikethrough denote superseded plans):

- O/S Location Map Extract - 2 Northumberland Ave. RG2 7PN - LOC 03
- Block Plan - 21/07/04
- ~~Existing Floor Plans - 21/29/01~~
- ~~Existing Elevations - 21/29/02~~
- Proposed Floor Plans - 21/29/03
- ~~Proposed Elevations - 21/29/04~~
- Tree Survey Plan - 21/07/16 Rev A
- Tree Pit Section - 21/07/18
- Tree Protection / Landscaping Plan - 21/07/19
- Site photos to support Tree Survey
- Landscaping Implementation Statement
- Building Section - 21/29/09

Received on 27/10/2021

- Ecological Survey Report by AA Environmental Limited dated 16 August 2021

Received on 01/11/2021

- ~~Existing Floor Plans - 21/29/01 Rev A~~
- ~~Existing Elevations - 21/29/02 Rev A~~
- ~~Proposed Elevations - 21/29/04 Rev A~~

Received on 03/12/2021

- Existing Floor Plans - 21/29/01 Rev B
- Proposed Floor Plans - 21/29/03 Rev B

Received on 20/12/2021

- Existing Elevations - 21/29/02 Rev B
- Proposed Elevations - 21/29/04 Rev B

Received on 21/12/2021

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

2 Northumberland Avenue

061228/FUL - Change of use from single dwelling to 1 x 2 bed flat, 1 x 1 bed flat and 2 x studio flats - Application Withdrawn on 21/12/2006

061250/FUL - Change of use from a single dwelling to 6 flats - Application Withdrawn on 11/09/2006

210451/CLE - Certificate of Lawfulness for Existing use as Sui Generis HMO for a maximum of 10 occupants - Application Permitted on 26/07/2021

211054/FUL - Proposed part 2 storey and single storey rear extension following demolition of existing - Application Withdrawn on 01/11/2021

4 Northumberland Avenue

211056/FUL - Proposed part 2 storey and single storey rear extension following demolition of existing - Application Withdrawn on 01/11/2021

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 The following addresses were consulted by letter.

Neighbours:

4 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, RG2 7PN - No response received.

6 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, RG2 7PN - Response received on 23/11/2021.

- Concern with regards to increased vehicular traffic.
- Questions the need for a separate entrance to the plant room.
- Concerns with loss of privacy due to side facing windows.

Flats 1 to 35, Millennium Court, 2A Northumberland Avenue, Reading, RG2 7PN - No responses received.

Reading Borough Council, Ecology - Response received on 09/11/2021.

- *"A letter detailing the results of a Preliminary Bat Assessment (AA Environment Consultancy, August 2021) has been submitted and carried out to the appropriate standard. This concludes that the risk of bats being affected by the proposals is minimal. As such, since the proposals are unlikely to affect bats or other protected species, there are no objections to this application on ecological grounds.*
- *However, a precautionary approach to removal of hanging tiles near the rear dormer was recommended and an informative should be included on the decision notice."*

Reading Borough Council, Transport Development Control - Response received on 16/11/2021.

- *"In accordance with the Councils current standards 0.25 parking spaces should be provided for each lettable room, therefore the development site should be provided with a total of 3 off road parking spaces. Parking is currently provided on an area of hardstanding along the frontage of both properties served by existing dropped kerbs. The proposal does not change the existing parking arrangement.*
- *There are no Transport objections to this application."*
- Officer Note: The response from Transport Development Control stated that 2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue would be providing 5 bedrooms each rather than 6. Despite this, the total of off-road parking spaces required is the same.

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment - Response received on 14/12/2021

- A number of details are still lacking on both tree retention and protection and landscaping counts, but sufficient information is provided that we are confident, in principle, these can be addressed. Therefore, the application is supported in terms of trees and landscape subject to conditions securing small landscaping details and an Arboricultural Method Statement.

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

H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

EN12 Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14 Trees, Hedges and Woodland

TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 Principle of Development

The proposed development seeks rear extensions to the existing HMO to improve the living accommodation for occupants at 2 Northumberland Avenue. The number of bedrooms at the property would increase from 5 to 6 at No. 2, but decrease (in terms of number of bedrooms) from 8 to 6 at No. 4. However, the overall standard of accommodation would improve, with regularly shaped/sized rooms proposed and all rooms including en-suite facilities. As such, the principle of the development proposed is considered acceptable.

7.2 Design

Ground floor rear extensions and infill extension are proposed to the outrigger to the semi-detached pair of 2 & 4 Northumberland Avenue. The extension extends 3m from the ground floor rear wall of the existing outrigger, while the depth of the infill extension is 9.5m from the rear wall of the main house. Rear and side extensions are also proposed to the first-floor rear bedroom. Alterations to the roof are also proposed, which include two small flat roof dormer and alterations to the roof of the existing outrigger.

While flat roof dormers are not generally supported, number 4 features a small flat roof dormer as existing. The flat roof dormer is considered to sit comfortably within the existing roof slope, with the top of the dormer set down from the existing ridge by 1.1m. The flat roof dormer proposed under this application is not considered overly large or harmful to the character and appearance of 2 & 4 Northumberland Avenue to the point of refusal.

The alterations proposed to the rear of 2 & 4 Northumberland Avenue are considered a transformation of the existing outrigger to increase the internal usable floorspace at the existing HMOs. The most notable change would be to the roof of the outrigger, which is changing from two separate pitched roofs to a larger dual pitched roof. Whilst this is the case, the ridge is still set down from the ridge of the main house by 0.5m.

The proposed extensions are to the rear of 2 & 4 Northumberland Avenue and thus will almost be entirely obscured from the street scene. The proposed alterations to the roof may potentially be visible from the highway from certain angles, however, these potential views are not considered harmful to the visual amenity of the surrounding area. The proposed development is therefore not considered harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the main house. Whilst acknowledged to be a significant change in comparison with the existing situation, the proposal maintains the uniformity of the pair and in design terms is considered to meet the requirements of policy CC7.

With regards to the materials proposed; the brickwork and render have been specified to match the existing dwelling. The roof tiles have been specified as plain clay double lapped to match existing. The windows and doors have been specified to white uPVC to match existing.

The size and scale of the proposed development, whilst acknowledged to be significant, is considered sufficiently subservient to the existing building / pair / rear elevation context and acceptable in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

As explained in Section 2 of this report; the proposed development was originally submitted as two separate applications for 2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue respectively. As a result, there were officer concerns regarding the harmful impact from a design perspective should only one of the developments be carried out. The proposal has been re-submitted as a combined development under one application. This is to ensure that the combined development at 2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue is carried out in accordance with one approved plan.

7.3 Safeguarding Amenity

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed extensions will result in a different relationship between No. 4 and No. 6, the proposed development is not considered to have a significantly detrimental impact on the living conditions at 6 Northumberland Avenue. The proposed extensions are to the north of 6 Northumberland Avenue, as a result it is not considered that there would be such a harmful loss of natural light to habitable rooms at number 6 to warrant the refusal of the application on this basis. The rear extensions are also considered not to significantly harm the outlook or appear overbearing to number 6 due to the depth, size and scale of the proposed rear extensions. This is considered the case partly owing to the size, scale and appearance of the existing outrigger, with the proposals adding to this, but not to such an extent to warrant the refusal of the application on this basis.

Number 6 have raised concerns with the development as to increased vehicular traffic, the need for a separate external entrance to the plant room, and loss of privacy due to the side facing windows proposed.

The proposed development will utilise existing car park spaces and access, the development also does not propose an increased number of occupants (across the two buildings the number of bedrooms is actually decreasing from 13 to 12). Therefore, the proposed development is not considered to give rise to increased vehicular parking or harmfully increase traffic along Northumberland Avenue.

With regard to the separate entrance to the plant room, which is located to the side of the main house at number 4; the agent has explained that the external access to the plant room is preferred as maintenance and repairs could be carried out without disturbance to the occupants. The separate access to the plant room is not considered in itself to be likely to give rise to harmful levels of noise or disturbance to neighbouring residents.

It is acknowledged that additional first floor side facing windows are proposed to the first floor of 4 Northumberland Avenue. Beyond the rear elevation of 6 Northumberland Avenue, two small new first floor windows are proposed which serve ensuite bathrooms. These two windows will be conditioned to be obscure glazed and top openable from a height of 1.7m from finished floor level to avoid loss of privacy to number 6. A roof light is also proposed to the ensuite bathroom to the second floor. A new first floor window is also proposed to the side elevation of number 4, serving the ensuite to the front bedroom. The windows proposed to the side of number 4 are not considered harmful in terms of size or quantity in order for there to be a harmful sense of overlooking to number 6. It is not considered necessary to condition that the existing openings to be retained to the side elevation of number 4 be obscure glazed.

No other nearby occupier is considered to experience any significant level of harm to their amenity as a result of the proposed development. This includes the flats to the north of the proposal site at Millennium Court. This is due to the size and scale of the development and the

separation distance between the proposed development and habitable rooms at Millennium Court.

For current and any future occupiers of the host building, the additional space created by the proposed extensions will improve the standard of accommodation at the property. It is acknowledged that 2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue are large HMO as existing (*Sui Generis*). The proposed development is considered to improve the living conditions for occupants, providing larger bedrooms, each with en-suite facilities. The proposed layout and location of rooms within the HMO is considered acceptable and retains the provisions of the Residential Conversions SPD of one communal room to six bedrooms.

It is considered appropriate to condition the approval of this application to restrict the potential insertion of further side facing windows to the side elevations of the first-floor rear extension under permitted development. This is to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. A condition will also be included to prevent the flat roof area above the ground floor extension becoming a terrace, to protect the amenity of both neighbouring occupiers. As already mentioned, the newly proposed first floor side facing openings will be secured as obscure glazed and top openable from a height of 1.7m from finished floor level to avoid loss of privacy to neighbouring residents.

Overall, the proposed development is not considered to harm the living conditions to neighbouring properties or the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposed development is considered in accordance with policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

7.4 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space, which states that:

- *Usable outdoor space for houses should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling. To which it relates.*

It is considered that this proposal will not represent an unacceptable loss in private outdoor space. The depth of the extensions is considered to allow for an appropriate amount of private outdoor space in the rear garden.

7.4 Trees

A Tree Protection and Landscaping Plan, and a Landscaping Implementation Statement were provided to support this application. There is a particular concern given that the rear boundary of 2 & 4 Northumberland Avenue is lined with TPO protected trees, while a TPO protected Yew tree is situated to the front of Millennium Court overhanging the driveway of number 2. The concerns raised by Natural Environment have not been entirely overcome, however, the view from officers is that these concerns can be suitably overcome via condition to any approval of this application. These concerns relate to the provision of an appropriate small landscaping plan, and Arboricultural Method Statement. In accordance with Section 100ZA (5) of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the applicant has agreed to the inclusion of a pre-commencement condition regarding an Arboricultural Method statement to be submitted to and approved by the LPA prior to development commencing on site. The pre-commencement condition was agreed in writing on 17/12/2021.

7.5 Transport

As detailed in the response from Transport Development Control to this application; in accordance with the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD the current standards 0.25 parking spaces will be provided for each lettable room. Therefore, the development site is required to provide 3 off road parking spaces for a total of 12 rooms (6 rooms proposed at number 2, 6 rooms proposed at number 4). The existing vehicle parking situation is currently provided on an area of hardstanding along the frontage of both properties. This is served by existing dropped kerbs. As the development does not necessitate the need for changes to the

existing vehicular parking arrangement, the proposal is considered in accordance with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

As clarified earlier in the report; the response from Transport Development Control stated that 2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue would be providing 5 bedrooms each rather than 6. Despite this, the total of off-road parking spaces required in accordance with the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD remains the same at 0.25 on site vehicle parking spaces per room.

7.6 Ecology

Due to the works proposed to the roof of 2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue, it was required that a bat survey be carried out to determine whether or not the proposal would have an acceptable impact to any roosting bats. An ecological survey report was submitted to support this application on 01/11/2021. This survey covered both 2 and 4 Northumberland Avenue, with the semi-detached pair being inspected for any signs of roosting bats. The report concluded there is negligible potential for roosting bats within the buildings. The RBC Ecology consultant has confirmed agreement with the report submitted, with no further assessment or conditions required.

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:

Plans considered:

- O/S Location Map Extract - 2 Northumberland Ave. RG2 7PN - LOC 03
- Block Plan - 21/07/04
- Proposed Floor Plans - 21/29/03
- Building Section - 21/29/09

Received on 27/10/2021

- Ecological Survey Report by AA Environmental Limited dated 16 August 2021

Received on 01/11/2021

- Proposed Floor Plans - 21/29/03 Rev B

Received on 20/12/2021

- Proposed Elevations - 21/29/04 Rev B

Received on 21/12/2021

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 Policies CC7 and H9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

PD2: No New Openings

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order) no windows/doors/dormers/openings, other than those shown on the approved plans shall at any time be placed in the side elevations of the first floor rear extension hereby permitted without the grant of a separate 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 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

PD3: Obscure Glazing

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and/or re-enacting that Order) the three newly proposed first floor south side facing windows at No. 4 Northumberland Avenue (each serving a bathroom as per the approved floor plan) shall be top openable above 1.7m as a minimum when measured from the floor level of the respective rooms, and glazed with obscure glass before occupation of the development hereby approved and shall be permanently maintained as such.

REASON: To safeguard the amenities of the adjoining premises from overlooking and loss of privacy in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

PD5: Use of Roof Restricted

The roof area of the ground floor rear extensions 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.

L1: Landscaping Small Scale (To Be Approved)

Prior to first occupation/use of any extension hereby approved, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall specify means of treatment for hard surfaced areas, means of enclosure including mammal gaps where appropriate, specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted (including replacement trees and tree pit specifications where appropriate, and must include a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of any extension or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

L7: Arboricultural Method Statement (To Be Submitted)

No development shall commence on site (including demolition or preparatory works) until an Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan in accordance with the relevant recommendations of appropriate British Standards or other recognised Codes of Good Practice for all existing trees that are not shown as being removed on the approved drawings, both within and adjacent to the site, has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan.

Reason: In order to ensure that appropriate protection is given to trees of amenity value within and adjacent to the site in accordance with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

11. INFORMATIVES

Standard Informatives

Ecology Informative

In the unlikely event that bats are found prior to or during the works to remove hanging tiles, all works must cease immediately, and Natural England contacted for further advice before works can proceed.