

DELEGATED REPORT

Ward: Battle

App No.: 201456

Address: 60 Western Elms Avenue, Reading, RG30 2AN

Proposal: Conversion of existing extended house into 4x2-bed flats and a studio flat in the loft space with associated parking.

Applicant: Mrs Valentina Xhilaga

Deadline: 16/12/2020 - Extended to 29 October 2021

RECOMMENDATION: Grant

With S106 for affordable housing contribution. Payment of £7,875 before occupation of any flat hereby approved.

Conditions as standard and recommended by consultees.

Condition to prevent internal sub-division.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site is a two storey detached dwelling on the western side of Western Elms Avenue. It has a hipped roof. To the south, the site lies adjacent to St Edward's Prep School and to the north lies adjacent to Baron Court, a small block of flats. Properties along Western Elms Avenue are of a variety of styles and designs. However primarily the road has larger detached properties located in relatively spacious plots.
- 1.2 The road also has a number of street trees on the southern side of the road. Those at the front of the application site have Tree Protection Orders placed on them. The site is also located within an air quality management area. Property not listed or in conservation area.

Site Location Plan & photo



EXISTING



Previous appearance



Current appearance

2 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal description has been amended to as shown above to record that the original house is in the process of being extended which facilitates the proposed conversion. It also refers to the parking area to be created on the frontage. Internal changes to the internal layout would provide 2 bed flats 1 & 2 on the ground floor and flats 3 & 4 on the first floor with a 1 bed studio apartment in the converted (with front facing dormers) roof. Changes to the front parking area are also proposed. At the rear amenity space of c100sq.m is shown with a bike store.

- 2.2 Submitted Plans and Documentation:

200804-1- Location plans

200804-2 - Proposed Block plan

200804-3C - Site Plan (amended to address landscape concerns)

200804-4 - Proposed floor plans

200804-5 - Proposed elevations

200804-6 - Existing floor plans

200804-7 - Existing elevations

- 2.3 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):

In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The proposal will create additional residential floorspace which will be CIL liable.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

191471 - Two storey side extension, two storey rear extension and hipped roof to gable. Granted and under construction.

191345 - Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension & hipped roof to gable roof - Application Withdrawn

4 CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Statutory - none

4.2 Non-statutory

Natural Environment

Previous natural environment comments raised concerns for the development's impact on two TPO Yew trees (T8 and T5 of TPO 29/003) and one non-TPO Western Red Cedar tree (T15 on latest submitted arb docs). Specifically, the driveway extension and bin storage provision on the north boundary is encroaching into the T8's RPA while the hard paving to provide

access and to enable development of the bicycle storage encroaches into T5 and T15's RPAs.

The submitted Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement dated 20th April 2021, with the accompanying Tree Protection Plan, address these concerns and, where not entirely avoided, provide solutions to mitigate the impact on trees. Appropriate Construction Exclusion Zones were also provisioned for all soft landscaped areas within RPAs that should be protected from site operations.

I note the existing hard paved surface in front and along the southern side of the house is now the designated bin storage and, respectively, the access way to the bicycle storage.

The bicycle storage area overlapping T15's RPA is provisioned with 75m deep cellular confinement system on geotextile base and low-invasive edging, thus mitigating soil compaction or root severing concerns previously raised.

The driveway extension into the planting bed on the northern boundary was reduced by tapering it and the same cellular confinement system as above is used to mitigate the impact on T8's RPA, where it still overlaps it.

Careful consideration should be given to the works intended to extend southwards the planting bed T8 sits in, done through removal of existing block paving. The AMS and TPP provision the existing surfacing is hand-removed and I would add that no ground level modifications should result following these works. Overall, if the works are carried out appropriately, this is a positive change in T8's rooting environment in the long term.

Some questions and concerns remain with regards to the service lines routes, including drainage, which have not been thoroughly addressed by the submitted documents (previous or latest). The AMS Section 4.5.1 mentions in passing that 'Use of existing service routing where possible with the routing of additional services outside of amended RPAs of any retained trees. NJUG Volume 4 Guidelines to be followed for any excavation / installation near trees'. However, none of the submitted plans, existing or proposed, show at least indicatively where the service lines routes are. We could ultimately secure this detail by condition if information about the ability to use existing would be given with a reasonable degree of certainty.

With regards to landscaping, I note the two small planting provisions on either side of the building's main entrance shown on the initial Site Plan Drg. No. 200804-03 are not shown on the latest submitted (attached to Mr. Naweed's e-mail of 9th March 2021) Site Plan 200804-3B. The planting, albeit small sized, rightly justified the proposed development in the Air Quality Management Area by slightly net increasing the greening on site. I acknowledge that one side of that is now used for bin storage, but I wonder why the other one was removed.

Furthermore, the latest Site Plan is not consistent with the layout used by the Arb Documentation, which it should. Specifically, the Site Plan does not show the amended, reduced driveway extension into the northern boundary planting bed.

In conclusion, the retained trees concerns have successfully been addressed by the Arb documentation submitted and, subject to planning permission being

given before a further submission, should be secured by condition L7A, but amendments to the Site Plan to account for one planting provision on the building's entrance and the reduced driveway extension are required. Once the revised site plan is received and is consistent with the TPP, I will have no objections subject to the following conditions:

L1 Landscaping (small scale) and L7A Arb method statement.

Transport:

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. The site is situated in close proximity to the C400 Tilehurst Road, which is a main transport corridor between central Reading and the west. This zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. The eastbound bus services provide access to Reading Town Centre whilst the westbound bus services provide access to areas of Tilehurst and Calcot. Reading West Railway Station is located within 300m of the site.

The proposed plans illustrate a total of 4 parking spaces which is 1 space below the Council's standards. Policy TR5 of the Local Plan states ***"Development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport"***. It is important that enough parking is provided so that there is not a knock-on effect on the safety and function of the highway through on-street parking but on the other hand, an over-provision of car parking can lead to less sustainable travel choices.

A residential parking scheme operates in the area, therefore unauthorised on street parking is controlled and managed through the administration of the scheme. It should be noted that residents of the new flats would not be eligible to apply for a Resident or Visitor Permits. In addition to this there are on street parking restrictions in the form of double yellow lines, time restricted bays and private parking restrictions in place which 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.

In view of this, I do not object to this application on parking grounds given that the development would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

On matters of detail, the development is required to provide a minimum of 0.5 cycle parking spaces for each residential unit. A cycle shelter is located in rear garden of each property with side access. The proposed location is acceptable, however, we require detailed plans confirming that the cycle parking provision meets the Council's adopted standards in terms of layout. I am, however, happy for this to be dealt with by way of a condition.

A bin collection point is located at the front of the site to enable on-street servicing to occur from Western Elms Avenue.

Therefore, there are no Transport objections to this application subject to the conditions below.

<u>C2</u>	CONSTRUCTION METHOD STATEMENT (TO BE SUBMITTED)
<u>DC1</u>	VEHICLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED)
<u>DC5</u>	CYCLE PARKING (AS SPECIFIED)
<u>DC8</u>	REFUSE AND RECYCLING (AS SPECIFIED)
<u>DC20</u>	PARKING PERMITS 1
<u>DC21</u>	PARKING PERMITS 2

Informatives

IF3	Highways
I13	Parking Permits

4.3 Public

St Edwards School, 64 Tilehurst Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2JH
Flat 2, 62 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG30 2JH
59 Western Elms Avenue, Reading, RG30 2AL
Flat 4, 62 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG30 2JH
Flat 3, 62 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG30 2JH
57 Western Elms Avenue, Reading, RG30 2AL
Flat 1, 62 Tilehurst Road, Reading, RG30 2JH
Flat 2, 53 Western Elms Avenue, Reading, RG30 2AL
Flat 3, 53 Western Elms Avenue, Reading, RG30 2AL
Flat 4, 53 Western Elms Avenue, Reading, RG30 2AL

The above addresses were written to and a site notice displayed.

One objection was received stating:

It has been quite clear that the building works being carried out to the property did not match the approved planning application. It would appear that this was the intent all along and therefore deliberate. This was a private single dwelling residence and is now being converted into 5 residences. The existing parking for the area is already inadequate and cannot sustain this level. The property should remain as a single private residence. In addition, the doors and windows placed in the property overlook the adjacent property impacting on privacy.

Equalities Impact

When determining an application for planning permission 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 as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this 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 proposed development.

5 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

5.1 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".

5.2 The development plan for this Local Planning Authority is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant policies are:

CC1:	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC7:	Design and the Public Realm
CC8:	Safeguarding Amenity
EN14:	Trees, Hedges and Woodland
EN15:	Air Quality
H2:	Density and Mix
H3:	Affordable Housing
H5:	Standards for New Housing
H7:	Protecting the Existing Housing Stock
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

5.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Residential Conversions (2019)
Affordable Housing (2021)

6 APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- (i) Principle of development
- (ii) Design and impact on the character of the area
- (iii) Mix of units
- (iv) Amenity of future occupiers
- (v) Impact on neighbouring properties
- (vi) Transport and parking
- (vii) Affordable Housing
- (viii) Other matters

Principle of development

- 6.1 The application site currently contains a large detached property in residential use as a single dwelling but undergoing works to extend the property granted by planning permission 191471. The site is between high frequency bus routes along Oxford Road and Tilehurst Road and close to Reading West Station. The proposed development includes the extension of the current building (see history above) to provide 5 dwellings with a mix of unit sizes (4 x 2 bed and 1 x studio) in a sustainable location.
- 6.2 When assessed against Policy H8, the house conversion policy, the original property met the starting criteria of having 4 or more bedrooms and being in excess of 120 sq m in floor area. The proposal is also for 4 no 2 bedroom flats and so retains units capable of use by a family.
- 6.3 Overall the proposed development would make good use of the land available and would meet an established need for housing, therefore the proposal is also considered to comply with Policy H1 (Provision of Housing). The principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable, subject to other policy considerations being met.

Design and the impact on the character of the area

- 6.4 The development site is located within an established residential area, characterised by detached or semi-detached single residential dwellings, with a number of flatted developments (closer to Tilehurst Road), and

other uses (including doctors and day nurseries). The proposal seeks to convert the existing single dwelling into 5 flats. It is not considered that converting the property to flats in this instance would, individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm the existing mixed and sustainable community, as required by Policy H8.

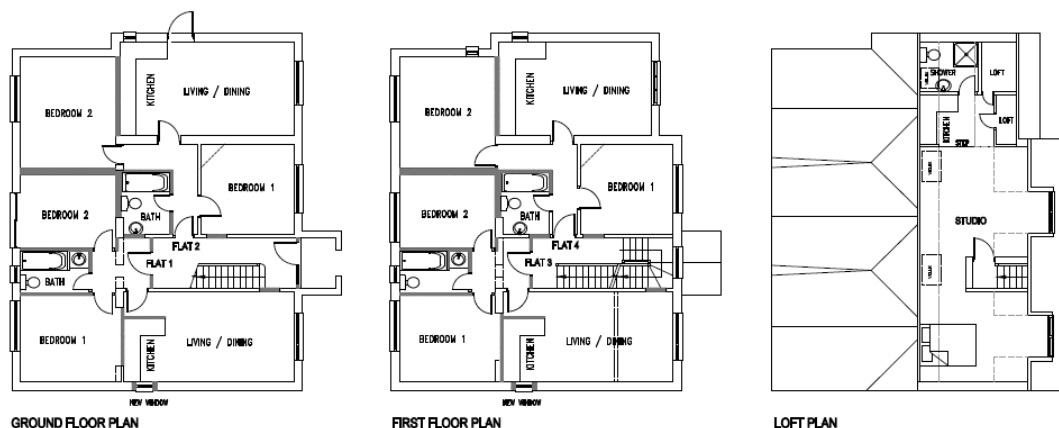
- 6.5 In design terms, the only external changes are those to extend the property as granted permission previously as an extension to the house and is currently under construction. It follows that the appearance will be acceptable. Changes to front garden to facilitate additional parking have been amended to retain more landscaping and overall it can be concluded that the proposed development meets policy CC7 objectives.

Mix of and layout of units

- 6.6 Policy H8 of the Local Plan indicates that converted properties should include a mix of units with at least 1 family unit. The proposal includes four well laid out 2 bedroom flats on the ground and first floors with a 1 bed studio in the roof space. The layout is well thought out and with reasonable privacy between the flats and access to garden space.

Amenity of future occupiers

- 6.7 The internal layout of all proposed flats is satisfactory with all flats containing a primary outlook over the front or rear garden.
- 6.8 The amount of amenity space available is sufficient and can be controlled by condition. Sound control measures along with stacking of same rooms is required by current Building Regulations to prevent any harm in this regard. The outlook from each flat and attainable light levels are acceptable too. Therefore, the scheme is considered to comply with Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) and H8.



Impact on neighbouring properties

- 6.8 This development has the potential to impact on neighbouring properties through the increase in the use of the extended building. However, whilst accepting the neighbour's concerns there is a considerable distance between the extended parts of the property and Baron Court. The application site is located to the south of these flats and separated by landscaped areas and a footpath - see photo below. It is therefore

considered that the proposal is not likely to cause more harm than had the extended property been used by a large family.

- 6.9 The rear facing windows at first floor will serve 3 bedrooms, as one might expect from a dwelling. Two small side windows are proposed that would look towards Baron Court but there are no side facing windows on Baron Court on the nearest elevation. The potential for some surveillance over the path may also be a benefit.



- 6.10 Officers consider that the residential amenity of occupiers of Baron Court will not be significantly harmed in any way which would justify refusal in terms of Policy CC8. However, any further intensification of use should be controlled and an appropriate condition to prevent further sub-division of the flats is recommended.

Transport and parking

- 6.11 There are no objections to this planning application from the Highway Authority. The parking level shown is suitable for the intended development and location. There is space available on site for required cycle/bin stores and the application includes potentially suitable arrangements for such. A condition will be used to make clear no automatic right to any parking permits.

Affordable Housing

- 6.12 The applicant has agreed to make an affordable housing contribution based on additional flat made possible by the previously approved and still under construction extended floor area. This will be secured by a S106 agreement.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and supplementary planning documents. The recommendation is shown above.