

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

App Ref: 210621/FUL

Address: 263 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7PY

Proposal: 2 x front pitched roof dormers and 2 x rear flat roofed dormers (amended)

Case Officer: Connie Davis

Agreed Target Decision date: 26/07/21

1. APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The property is located on the southern side of Oxford Road. The existing use of the property is C4 (HMO) licensed for a maximum of 6-persons on the upper floors and A3 restaurant use on ground floor.

The site is within the recently extended Castle Hill/ Russell Street/ Oxford Road Conservation Area, and is within the High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ).



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal seeks the installation of two front facing pitched roof dormers and two flat roof dormers. This is proposed to provide a better standard of accommodation for two existing first floor rooms within the HMO.

Planning permission was granted under application 200200 for the change of use of the site from A3 (restaurants and cafe - ground floor) and C4 (small HMO -upper floor) to 4no. C1 (serviced apartments) with external alterations including two front facing dormers, rear dormer and amendments to ground floor frontage.

This application seeks to retain the HMO at the upper floor level (with no indication of change on the ground floor level). As such, this application is purely for the proposed dormers which are the same design as those that were approved under the above planning application.

Documents received:

PL/A542/04 - Location & Site Plan
PL/A542/02 - Existing Elevations
Design and Access Statement

Received 28th April 2021

PL/A542/03 Rev A - Proposed Elevations
PL/A542/01 Rev A - Existing & Proposed Floor Plans

Received 21st June 2021

3. PLANNING HISTORY

200200/FUL - Change of use from A3 (restaurants and cafe - ground floor) and C4 (small HMO -upper floor) to 4no. C1 (serviced apartments) with external alterations including two front facing dormers, rear dormer and amendments to ground floor frontage - Application Permitted

190428/CLE - Certificate of lawfulness for the use of the first and second floor as a C4 6-person (maximum) house of multiple occupation (HMO) - Certificate Granted

060726/FUL (06-01267-FUL) - Change of use from A2 on ground floor to A3 with proposed single storey rear extension and internal changes to first and second floor accommodation.

120427/APC (12-01913-APPCON) - Discharge of conditions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of planning permission 06/01267/FUL

Also relevant - application 200199 for 265 Oxford Road. Change of use of first and second floor from C4 (Small HMO) to a two bedroom duplex flat with external alterations including ground floor front, two new front facing dormers and new rear dormer window. Permitted 11 September 2020.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) - No comments received

Public

The following addresses were consulted by letter on 29/04/21:

2 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP
Flats at 4 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP
6 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP
8 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP
10 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP
12 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP
10 Ormsby Street, Reading, RG1 7YR
10a Ormsby Street, Reading, RG1 7YR

8 Ormsby Street, Reading, Berkshire
6 Ormsby Street, Reading, RG1 7YR
4 Ormsby Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7YR
2 Ormsby Street, Reading, RG1 7YR
252-264 Oxford Rd, Reading, RG1 7YP
267 Oxford Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7PY
263-265 Oxford Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 7PY
2 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP
261 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7PY

A site notice was displayed between 21/06/21 - 12/07/21. In addition, an advert printed in the local press as the site is located within a Conservation Area. The advert was printed on 01/07/21 advising comments to be submitted no later than 22/07/21.

No responses have been received.

5. DISCUSSIONS WITH AGENT/ APPLICANT

The agent was contacted to advise that the originally proposed large flat roof dormer would be an unacceptable design and scale within the Conservation Area. As such, the scheme was modified to two smaller dormers. It was not considered necessary to re-consult neighbours on the revised scheme as it sees a reduction in the size of the dormer and fenestration.

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. PLANNING POLICY & GUIDANCE

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with policies in the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF, 2021) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The current development plan is Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Relevant policies:

CC1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
CC7	Design and the public realm
CC8	Safeguarding amenity
EN1	Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3	Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN6	New Development in a Historic Context

Other documents

Castle Hill/ Russell Street/ Oxford Road Conservation Area Appraisal (March, 2020)
Design Guide to House Extensions SPD (2021)

7. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design considerations and impact on the Conservation Area
- Residential amenity and quality of accommodation

Principle of development

In principle, there is not considered strong resistance to the dormer additions so long as the proposal complies with design and amenity policies, as well as being suitable in relation to the surrounding Conservation Area.

Design considerations and impact on the Conservation Area

Policy CC7 seeks to ensure development is of a high quality which respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area in which it is located. Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 seek to ensure development conserves and where possible enhances the historic environment (including conservation areas).

The proposal includes the replacement of the existing single gable end dormer window to the front with two front facing dormers, and erection of two flat roof dormers to the rear. The application site is a part of a pair of two-storey terraces with loft accommodation which is stepped down from the adjoining 3-storey terrace and is a transition downward to the adjoining single storey commercial unit. The adjoining property (no. 265) has a front facing pitched dormer.

As a pair of dwellings within a conservation area, the site and adjoining property display architectural detailing including symmetrical front dormer windows which is considered a positive aspect of the buildings, and despite the ground floor alterations which detract from the appearance of the building (by virtue of not being built in brick), the upper floors are still considered architecturally featureful. The removal of the existing dormer and replacement with two front facing dormers individually could unbalance the pair of dwellings and potentially detract from the appearance of the conservation area.

However, the application site, and adjoining site are within the same ownership, and the adjoining property has also obtained planning permission to for two front facing dormers (200199). The design of the front facing dormers are similar to the appearance of the existing, having a pitch similar to the main building would be considered appropriate for the building within a conservation area. In addition, the materials for the dormers will be important given the conservation area status. Roof slate is proposed to match that on the main roof, along with materials to match those found on the host building such as windows.

In terms of the proposed rear facing dormers (flat roof dormers), although not a design that would generally be expected or considered acceptable (as it would be contrary to the Council's design guidance) the building contains one flat roof dormer, and a large number of flat roof dormers are prevalent along the adjoining terrace, and in the surrounding area. As such, in this instance two small, spaced out dormers are considered acceptable. They are considered suitably placed within the roof slope.

It is recognised that the proposed site is located within a High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ). However due to the small scale of the proposal, the scheme is not considered to warrant a financial contribution to make improvement to the public realm.

Residential amenity and quality of accommodation

The proposed front and rear dormer windows would provide additional head height within the loft room which is considered to enhance the usability of this space for future residents. There would not be considered harmful impacts upon adjoining dwellings or the proposed/existing as a result of the dormers as this is a common relationship between buildings in the area. A separation distance of over 20m would still be maintained between the rear dormer windows and the rear windows of properties behind the application site on Ormsby Street. As such, the proposed development is considered acceptable in terms of neighbouring amenity in line with policy CC8.

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.

RECCOMENDATION: GRANT

Conditions:

1. Time Limit
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials as specified

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction
4. Encroachment
5. Positive and Proactive