

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 20/09/21

Application No: 211190/FUL

Address: 38 Basingstoke Road

Proposal: Change of use of dwelling (Class C3) to house in multiple occupation (Class C4) (retrospective)

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises a mid-terraced residential property. The site is located in an Article 4 area, restricting the change of use from a dwellinghouse to a HMO. The surrounding area is residential in character.

Proposal

The proposal is for the retrospective change of use of the dwelling to a house in multiple occupation. The submission notes that the property has been in use as a 5 bed HMO for in excess of 10 years, though was vacant at the time of the application submission. No external alterations are included within the application proposal.

Plans Considered

The applicant supplied the following, received 20/07/21:

Site Location

Block Plan

Threshold Calculation Supporting Document

Subsequently the applicant supplied the following, received 26/07/21:

Existing Ground Floor Plan

Existing First Floor Plan

Existing Second Floor Plan

Relevant Planning History

None.

Consultation Responses

Neighbouring owners and occupiers at 36 & 40 Basingstoke Road and 2 Swainstone Road were consulted by letter. A site notices was displayed. No letters of representation were received.

Reading Borough Transport Development Control

Advised that future occupants would not be entitled to residents parking permits, due to existing parking pressures. Conditions requiring details of bicycle and bin storage recommended.

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 EN18 - Flooding and Drainage

Policy H1 - Provision of Housing

Policy H2 - Density and Mix

Policy H5 - Standards for New Housing

Policy H8 - Residential Conversions

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

Supplementary Planning Document - Residential Conversions (2013)

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

Appraisal

Principle of development

An Article 4 Direction is in place in parts of Redlands, Katesgrove and Park Wards, removing the permitted development right to convert from a dwellinghouse (Class C3) to a house in multiple occupation (Class C4). As set out in the Residential Conversions SPD, the

Direction is in place to ensure a mixed and sustainable community, with no significant loss of single family housing:

“Residential conversions have an important role to play in housing land supply in Reading and contributing to the provision of reasonably affordable rented accommodation. However, conversions, either individually or cumulatively, can have a harmful impact through unduly diluting mixed and sustainable communities.”

Accordingly, the SPD defines a ‘tipping point’ where the concentration of HMO’s becomes over-dominant and the community is no longer considered to be mixed and sustainable. The tipping point is set at 25%. Any residential property within 50m of the front door of the application property will be included in the threshold calculation. If part of a building falls within the radius and partly without, then the property will form part of the assessment. For the avoidance of doubt, the prospective use of the application property will be taken into account in calculating the percentage of properties.

29 residential properties (including 38 Basingstoke Road) fall within the 50m radius of the front door of 38 Basingstoke Road:

20-54 (evens) Basingstoke Road

1-9 (odds) & 2-12 (evens) Swainstone Road

To identify which of these properties are in HMO use, the Council’s Environmental Health, Licencing information and Council Tax records have been interrogated, along with a list of approved HMO planning applications and estate agency information. As part of data protection controls, this report is unable to identify specific properties in HMO use.

Of the 29 properties identified, 8 were found to be in HMO use. Including the use of 38 Basingstoke Road, 9 properties are in HMO use. This equates to 31.03% of the properties within the 50m radius, comfortably exceeding the 25% established threshold.

The principle of the change of use is therefore unacceptable. The proportion of HMO’s would result in HMO’s representing significantly more than 25% of the residential properties within a 50m radius of the application site. This is not conducive to a mixed and sustainable community. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policy H8 of the Local Plan and the Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document.

Design and appearance

No external alterations have been included within the submission to facilitate the change of use.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

The use of the property as an HMO does not cause a significantly greater degree of harm to neighbouring amenity than the use of the property as a dwelling. Were permission to be granted, a condition would be applied requiring a HMO Tenant Management Plan to be agreed.

Amenity of future occupiers

Each of the bedrooms have an acceptable outlook and meet the minimum floor space standards, as set out in the Residential Conversions SPD. As no sectional drawing has been provided, it cannot be confirmed whether the bedrooms at the second floor receive adequate headroom. The proposal is contrary to Policy H8 of the Local Plan and the Residential Conversions SPD on this basis.

Transport

In accordance with the Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development requires the provision of one off-road parking space. The property is served by an existing dropped kerb and area of hardstanding to the site frontage, which conforms to the Council's current standards. The site is located within a Residents Parking Permit Zone. Were permission to be granted, a condition would be applied restricting future parking permits from being issued to occupants of the property, due to existing on-street parking pressures in the vicinity of the site.

The development requires the provision of 2 secure, covered and lockable cycle storage spaces, and bin storage. No details have been forthcoming. The proposal is contrary to Policies H8 and TR5 of the Local Plan, the Residential Conversions SPD and the Parking Standards and Design SPD on this basis.

Conclusion

The proposal has been assessed and found to be unacceptable, contrary to Policy H8 and the Residential Conversions SPD. The proposed conversion would exceed the 25% threshold of HMO's, further diluting and harming a mixed and sustainable community.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE