

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

SITE ADDRESS: 2 Mason Street

APPLICATION NUMBER: 190533/FUL

PROPOSAL: Conversion of C3 dwellinghouse dwelling house into 3 flats (2x 2 bed flats, 1 x 1-bed flat). Part single storey rear extension, part two-storey rear extension.

CASE OFFICER: Anthony Scholes

DETERMINATION DATE: 25 September 2019

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The site relates to an end of terrace residential dwelling which contains an integral single garage. The property is accessed from Mason Street and is located within close proximity of the Reading Town Centre. The area is characterised by dense residential development with a mix of flatted developments and single dwelling houses. It should be noted a single storey rear extension and two storey rear extension are currently partly implemented under permission 04-00982-FUL (041155). As such, the developer could complete the development under this approval and the starting point for assessment would be that it is complete.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the existing dwelling in to 3 flats (2x 2-bed, and 1 x 1-bed). The proposal would include a part single-storey, part two-storey rear extension, and would include alterations to the main façade to integrate the current gazunder into the ground floor flat.

Discussions with agent/applicant

The agent has been contacted on a number of occasions regarding amendments to the original proposal in relation to provision of a 'family unit', and the need to provide rear amenity space for this unit. Revisions have been accepted to make the scheme more acceptable, and have not materially affected the proposal to warrant formal re-consultation.

Relevant Planning History

04-00982-FUL (041155) - Second storey pitched roof rear extension APPROVED 12/10/2004
Partially implemented

03-00731-FUL (030662) - Two storey side extension to extend garage and add a bedroom and single rear extension of existing garage. APPROVED 7/8/2003

02-01332-FUL (021440) - Two storey side and single rear extension. REFUSED 18/12/2002

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Transport - No objection, subject to conditions and informatives.

EP - No objection, subject to conditions and informatives.

Notification letters regarding the application were sent to neighbouring properties. No responses have been received to date.

Equalities Act

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

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. 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 POLICIES AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

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'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

In this regard the NPPF allows full weight to be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) until

March 2013. The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material planning considerations.

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

National

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008, updated 2015)

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS2 Waste Minimisation
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS14 Provision of Housing
- CS15 Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix
- CS18 Residential Conversions
- CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
- CS24 Car / Cycle Parking
- CS34 Pollution and Water Resources
- CS35 Flooding

Sites and Detailed Policies Document - (Adopted October 2012)

- DM1 Adaptation to Climate Change
- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM6 Affordable Housing
- DM8 Residential Conversions
- DM9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
- DM10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters

Emerging Local Plan - Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC7: Design and the Public Realm
CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
H1: Provision of Housing
H2: Density and Mix
H3: Affordable Housing
H8: Residential Conversions
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H9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
EN15: Air Quality
EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (adopted October 2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted July 2011)

Residential Conversions SPD (adopted November 2013)

Design guide to House Extension (Adopted May 2003)

APPRAISAL

Principle

The NPPF states that “the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies”, it also encourage efficient use of land taking into account: identified need for housing, local market conditions, the availability and capacity of infrastructure, the desirability of maintaining the existing character of the area, and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive, and healthy places. The RBC LDF and Emerging local plan supports the provision of additional dwelling units to meet the requirement for additional dwelling per annum. CS18 and H8 (Residential conversions) states that “proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats ... will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area”.

Policy CS15 and Policy H2 refers to the appropriate mix of residential development. This is assessed on a site by site basis taking into account the characteristics of the area in which it is located. The site is located on previously developed land and already in use as a single residential dwelling. As such the principle of the proposed development could be acceptable subject to the following material planning considerations.

The proposal would accord with the Residential Conversions SPD in that the existing dwelling has 4 or more bedrooms, and a total floor area of more than 120m² when built, Policy H8 of the new local plan, requires that the property to be converted measures more than 120m² (measuring from external walls). In this instance, the original dwelling may not have been 120m², however the exiting dwelling (and approved but incomplete additions) would make the current floor space greater than 120m² and as such this proposal would pass emerging local plan policies.

At least one unit of accommodation created would be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms (two, two bedroom units are proposed) and in terms of housing mix, the proposed 2 x 2-bed and 1 x 1-bed flats are considered acceptable.

Moreover, the provision of two additional residential unit will assist in the Council meeting its annual housing targets (policy CS14 and policy H1).

Design Considerations

The external alterations to the main façade include the removal of the existing garage treatments and replacement with a front facing window serving the ground floor flat, and a shared doorway for all three flats. These works are considered minor and are to be clad in matching materials to those of the existing dwelling and secured by condition. The conversion to flats would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the surrounding area.

To the rear of the dwelling, there is currently a partially constructed two-storey rear extension (as shown on Drawing No. 10 - Existing floor plan (under construction) as received 18 June 2019). There is also a fully constructed single storey rear extension, measuring at 4.45m and a partially completed patio (roof only) for the remaining depth. The proposal seeks approval for a single storey rear extension measuring 8.449m in total depth infilling the area

between the existing two-storey rear extension and patio area. Although substantial in depth, the proposed extension would be single storey, and by virtue of its height (2.6m) is not considered to be dominating or overbearing to the neighbouring property, nor would it result in a significant loss of daylight or sunlight to the adjoining occupiers. The extension would be flat roofed, a condition would be attached restricting permitted development rights to use the area as a roof terrace. Additionally, the extensions proposed would not significantly reduce the amount of amenity space to the rear of the site.

To the front of the property is currently an area of hardstanding used informally as parking for up to two vehicles. The parking area is insufficient without vehicles overhanging the public highway. As part of this application no details of the proposed treatments have been provided. As this hardstanding and lack of front boundary treatment detract from the character and appearance of the area, it is considered reasonable to ensure, by condition, that the applicant installs appropriate boundary treatments to contribute toward the character of the area, and remove the unsafe stationing of vehicle on the public footpath.

As such, the proposed extension would be considered acceptable in relation to the above mentioned policies.

Impact on Neighbours

The proposed development would result in a bedroom and kitchen window being located at first floor with the potential for overlooking into adjoining properties. In this instance, the proposal has located a bedroom at the closest point to properties along George Street, with the rear first floor kitchen/living room being in the centre of the property, additionally the loft would contain a single bedroom. The views attained from a first floor and loft bedroom would be no different to that attainable between other terrace properties in the immediate area and are considered acceptable in this regard. The proposed first floor kitchen/living room has been located to avoid the potential for additional overlooking/privacy concerns between dwellings and is also considered acceptable.

Quality of Amenity for Future Occupiers

All habitable rooms would be served by suitable daylighting, outlook and room sizes such as to provide a suitable standard of residential amenity for future occupiers, this includes bedroom 2 of flat 3 within the loft.

In terms of rear garden amenity space, the two-bedroom dwelling at ground floor would have exclusive access and would be considered to comply with local planning policies mentioned above.

Room stacking is considered acceptable and the appropriate insulation would be a requirement of building regulations, and has been demonstrated in this application for convenience.

Sustainability

Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, supported by the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD seeks the proposal, as a 'creation of new residential units through conversion', to comply with BREEAM Level of 'Very Good'. It is considered acceptable to deal with this matter by way of a suitably worded condition to require a final BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment certificate to be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation of the dwellings.

Transport

The proposed development is located within close proximity to the town centre, high frequency bus routes, train stations, and cycle ways. No on-site parking is proposed as part of the application. This is considered acceptable, and conditions are recommended to ensure appropriate on-site bicycle parking is provided. No parking permits will be issued to future occupiers, and will be ensured by condition.

Affordable Housing & CIL

The proposal relates to the conversion of an existing property and therefore is excluded from the requirements of Policy DM6 and no affordable housing contribution is required in this specific instance. Accordingly, no S106 legal agreement is required either.

The proposal is liable for CIL.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Full Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives.

