

DELEGATED FULL APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Battle

App Ref: 200603/FUL

Address: 9 Lorne Street

Proposals: Conversion of an existing dwelling to 2No. habitable units (Apartments).

Case Officer: Mr James Overall

Date received (valid from): 11 June 2020

Target Decision Date: 6 August 2020

Extended Decision Date: 11 November 2020

PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The application site is located off the main Oxford Road, located west of Reading town centre and comprises a four story, mid-terraced Victorian dwelling. The existing unit consists of a total of four bedrooms to the first and second floor with a flat-roof dormer to the rear.

The proposed scheme is to convert the existing unit to two apartments, both of which will contain 2-bedrooms, a bathroom, and open plan kitchen/lounge. The ground floor apartment will also contain a utility room.

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Date Received
Location Plan	Existing (not changing)	19141PP-05-10	30 Apr-20
Block Plan	Proposed	19141PP-11 Rev A	9 Oct-20
Basement Floor Plan	Existing	19141PP-01	27 Apr-20
Ground Floor Plan	Existing	19141PP-02	27 Apr-20
First Floor Plan	Existing	19141PP-03	27 Apr-20
Second Floor Plan	Existing	19141PP-04	27 Apr-20
Basement Floor Plan	Proposed	19141PP-06	27 Apr-20
Ground Floor Plan	Proposed	19141PP-07	27 Apr-20
First Floor Plan	Proposed	19141PP-08	27 Apr-20
Second Floor Plan	Proposed	19141PP-09	27 Apr-20
Elevations	Existing (not changing)	19141PP-05	27 Apr-20

PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant.

CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

- 7 Lorne Street
- 11 Lorne Street

No letters of representation have been received.

Transport

Although the site is located close to the borders of zone 1, the site is in Zone 2; therefore a 1 or 2 bedroom flat in this zone would require 1 vehicle parking space, not 0.5 as stated.

The on-street parking referred to in the email received on 9th October 2020 outside the property is not dedicated parking for the property and as this proposal will generate additional pressure for parking in the area there should be an assumption that any future occupants of the proposed dwellings will not be issued with a resident parking permit which will be covered by condition and an informative applied.

It is noted that cycle and bin storage has been illustrated in the attached plan but no detail of the type of storage have been provided which was requested in the original Transport Comments. However, we are happy to deal with this by way of condition in this instance.

Environmental Health

Use standard advice, which requires conditions relating to air quality and a noise assessment.

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

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) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
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
H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING
H7: PROTECTING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK
H8: RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS
TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

SPG/SPD

Revised Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
Residential Conversions (2013)
Affordable Housing 2020

Assessment

Principle of development

The application site is situated in an area made up of a diverse mix of single dwellings, HMOs and flats/apartments. The proposed scheme seeks to convert a single dwelling to two apartments.

Policy H8 requires properties to be converted to be in excess of 120 square metres (gross), which this property does (158 square metres). As such in principle the conversion of the property is acceptable, provided that the scheme complies with the other Policies set out within the Local Plan.

Character and appearance

The proposed scheme does not seek amendments to the exterior of the property. All the proposed physical changes relate to the interior elements of the property. It is therefore considered that the character of the area will not be detrimentally impacted as a result of planning permission being granted.

Residential amenity

The upper flat will have a GIA of 60 square metres; and the lower flat will have a GIA of 69 square metres. The nationally described space standards require a minimum GIA of 70 square metres for a two-bed, three-persons unit covering two storeys; and 79 square metres for a two-bed, four-persons unit covering two storeys.

Whilst both flats fall short of the required GIA, and the upper flat does so significantly; the open plan layout of the main habitual amenity space (lounge and kitchen) does in fact provide a greater level of amenity than a normal layout with separating walls. The open plan layout ensures that the unit will not feel cramped, and therefore alleviates concerns relating to the amenity of the future occupiers and is considered reasonable in relation to the urban area for which it is related.

The existing property contains four bedrooms, and the proposed scheme will similarly contain a total of four bedrooms; although this will now be two different households. It is therefore considered that the level of noise will not be significantly different to the level generated by the existing residential use.

With regard to external amenity space, the basement and ground floor unit would benefit from access to the rear garden, whilst the first and second floor unit would not. This arrangement is not considered to make the proposal unacceptable with Victoria Park approximately 370m to the north.

Transport and Environmental Health

No objections are raised from the Council's Transport Team or Environmental Health Team subject to conditions securing refuse storage, cycle storage, noise assessment and air quality.

The RBC Environmental Health standing advice recommends that a noise assessment and air quality assessment be submitted prior to commencement of development. As the property is currently a single dwelling and is located in an established residential area, officers do not consider it reasonable or necessary for any such conditions to be imposed for the conversion. To do so would place an overly onerous requirement on the developer when no new use is being introduced, and there is limited physical building works to the existing house.

Other matters

The proposal is exempt from affordable housing due to being a conversion. As such no affordable housing is required to be paid in the form of a contribution.

The applicant has duly completed the CIL liability form and it is confirmed that the proposal is CIL liable. BREEAM is unnecessary on this site, as it is not a major application.

Conclusion

It is considered that the development is not harmful to the character or appearance of the site or its surroundings and does not have a detrimental impact on the original building or neighbouring properties. As such the proposal is considered to conform with the Policies set out within the Local Plan (2019).

RECOMMENDATION:

Grant Planning Permission subject to conditions.