

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

263 OXFORD ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE – RG1 7PY

INTRODUCTION:

This statement has been prepared to support the planning application for the loft conversion with rear dormer and two number pitched roof dormer to the front elevation to improve the accommodation standards of existing two rooms at second floor level of 263 Oxford Road, Reading (HMO).

The property is in a Conservation Area and, therefore, in order to maintain the existing street scene, it is essential to preserve as many of the existing features as possible.

Permission has been previously granted (200200/FUL) for the Change of use from A3 (restaurants and cafe - ground floor) and C4 (small HMO - upper floor) to C1 (4no. serviced apartments) with external alterations including two front facing dormers, rear dormer and amendments to ground floor frontage. However, the subject of this planning application only relates to the second-floor amendments to provide two front dormers and one rear dormer (already approved and agreed with the local planning authority) while keeping the current use of the first & second floor (i.e; HMO), As per the delegated report (i.e; 200200) a two front dormer windows and rear dormer is acceptable.

The relevant policies and the previous planning application have been carefully consulted and taken into consideration to ensure that the proposal will have minimal impact to the local architectural appearance and character of the area.

SITE AND PLANNING HISTORY:

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The property is located on the southern side of Oxford Road, the application site contains a two-storey terraced property with a converted loft. 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 Russell Street/Castle Hill/Oxford Road Conservation Area.

The application site is a part of a pair of two-storey terraces with loft accommodation which is lower from the adjoining 3-storey terrace and is a higher to the adjoining single storey commercial unit offering transition.

Oxford Road is a designated cycle route and classified highway network. The property is within a sustainable location; it is in close proximity to the Reading West railway station and there is a regular bus service into the centre of Reading. There are a wide range of services and amenities provided for along Oxford Road, all within walking distance of the site.

PLANNING HISTORY:

880126 - Change of use from retail to office (Class A2) on ground floor section 32

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

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

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

PROPOSAL:

EXISTING LAYOUT:

The ground floor was last in use as a restaurant (Class A3). The first and second floor of the building are lawfully in use as a small house in multiple occupation (C4 HMO). The property has been extended previously with a successful planning application stated in planning history section also first and second floor of the building are lawfully in use as a small house in multiple occupation (C4 HMO).

PROPOSED LAYOUT:

The principal motive for the proposed works is to turn the unused sloping roof space into a decently sized bedrooms with a provision of the shower room to uplift the living standards for currently condensed rooms. Therefore, two front pitched roof dormers are being proposed to replace the existing single front dormer along with one rear dormer, this alteration will provide the much-needed space to the existing rooms.

The proposed two front dormers will provide 2 sash windows with the same design of the existing windows in the front elevation of the building. The dormer windows are also aligned with the below windows in order to incorporate the proposed dormer extension in the existing building.

The proposed front dormers are contained within the existing front roof slope and set back from the existing eaves with height not exceeding existing ridge line. The massing and positioning of the dormers were carefully designed to ensure the balance and symmetry of the property to be maintained.

The roof dormer is subservient to the overall mass and volume of the property. All proposed external works are contained within the existing roof geometry and are out of sight from street views.

The alterations to the rear roof include a creation of a flat roof dormer which would be well screened from the public realm. Within this area the appearance of the rear of the properties / buildings varies significantly, consequently the insertion of a dormer would not cause any significant level of harm on the character and appearance of the local area. In any case, the Council has recently approved similar dormers in the area. The proposed dormer is in keeping with the character of the area and will have little visual impact.

JUSTIFICATION:

The applicant considers and along with general planning guidelines that the proposed loft extension has been designed to preserve the integrity and proportions of the existing building and to be in keeping with the scale, pattern and density of the surrounding development. The design scheme does not propose to erode the character of the immediate locality.

The proposed internal alterations and new dormer additions are intended to improve the out-dated and unbalanced appearance of the existing roof. The use of good quality and matching finishing materials (such as

slate roof tiles) would better reflect the local distinctiveness as these are a dominant characteristic of this part of the conservation area and in keeping with the local vernacular.

The applicant has successfully provided the external windows to all habitable rooms, such as living rooms and bedrooms. As the provision of natural light and ventilation is a legal requirement under Environmental Health legislation.

With the proposed layout and alterations, the applicant is committed to offer the quality accommodation to its occupants. Therefore, this improvement will raise the living standards while offering decent sized bedroom.

The applicant has provided the sufficient and suitable refuse containers located at the front within the curtilage of the application building which is easily accessible for all occupants and the refuse collectors and ensuring they are sympathetically located with regard to their visual impact.

CONCLUSION:

As discussed above, this application takes into consideration the delegated report of the previous planning application for this property. In line with the results of this report, the inclusion of a dormers has been considered. In addition, some properties in the vicinity have dormer extensions within the rear roof slope, and different planning applications have been approved for the same proposed works of this planning application.

In accordance with the above assessment, it is considered that the proposal is consistent with the local policies. Therefore, the application should be recommended for grant of planning permission.