

Planning , Design and Access and Heritage Statement

2 Tilehurst Road, Reading RG1 7TN

February 2020

Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning statement is in support of a planning application that is being submitted on behalf of the Property Owner, Mr Sucha Singh, for the change of use from C1 use (Guest House of 18No bedrooms) to Sui Generis use (as a 'larger' Home in Multiple Occupation – HMO of 18No bedrooms) at 2 Tilehurst Road, Reading.

Heritage and description of the premises

- 1.2 The application property is a Grade II listed Building and lies in the Reading Borough Councils Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation Area. The property is detailed within the Historic England and is described as follows:

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1113596
Date first listed: 21-Jan-1976
Statutory Address: 2, TILEHURST ROAD

"Previously called Bellevue. Built before 1839 as a detached 2 1/2 storey stucco villa on basement. Front: 3 bays the centre a 2 storey canted 3 window bay with round headed windows on ground floor, open arcade to basement, segmental attic window. Glazing bar and cross glazed sash windows. Central break is higher with pediment gable formed of bracket verges and eaves. Wings have impost string carried over centre and cornices and blacking courses with central panels surmounted by elegant oval shaped urns, possibly of Coade stone. Flight of steps to doorway to right, flanked by panels and with radiating and wreathed fanlight. Slate roof with prominent corniced chimney stacks. North front similar but grander with bullseye attic window and arched recess with urn over centre window"



Historic map from 1883 shows the villa within its own grounds

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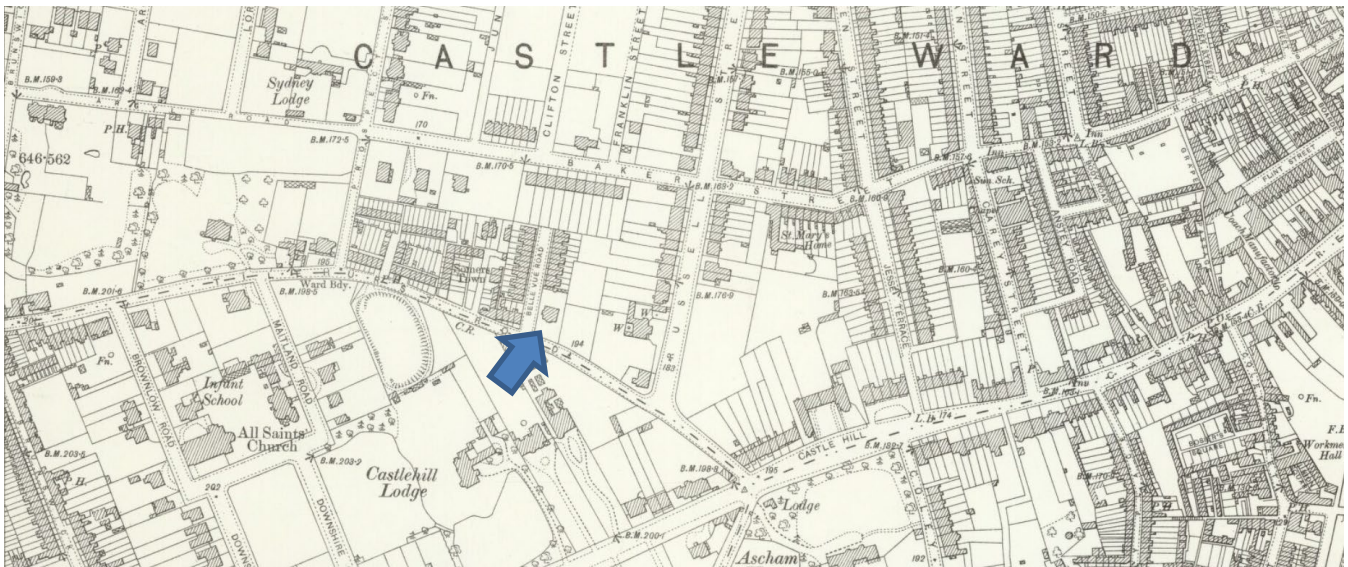
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As noted above the property was originally a private residence on its own grounds and this is confirmed when historical maps are observed as shown above in the 1883 map, and again below on the 1879 map.



Historic map from 1879 shows the villa within its own grounds

Later as seen for the first time on the 1900 map below, the grounds were developed with Belle Vue Road created with a housing development to the north and west of the villa, but with the villa remaining as a prominent building.



Historical map 1900

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The 1934 historical map above shows further development to the east of the villa with Nos 2a being added to the previously vacant site, and which relates to the current built status of the area.

The properties were included within the Russell Street and Castle Hill Conservation area in October 2005, with the main intention to control:

- The installation of new windows and doors
- Alterations to the roof, including changing the roof materials and installing rooflights.
- Building a porch.
- The erection of sheds and other outbuildings
- Creating an access onto the road.
- Building a hard standing
- The erection of alteration of gates, fences or walls.
- Painting the exterior of a building.

It should be noted that the only proposal that would affect the setting of the Grade II listed building would be to introduce an external enclosure for cycle parking as otherwise no other works are proposed to the buildings external façade or to the hardstanding as there is already hard standing that accommodates vehicular parking as part of the current use.

The site is not at risk of flooding

Current use and Planning History

- 1.3 Data taken from the council's planning pages shows the progression of the private dwelling which at some stage was converted for use as a small Guest House, and the use formalised from a 7bedroom Guest House to a formal C1 Use in 1993 with 18No rooms being available .

(Application 110392 although noted as 2 Tilehurst Road, actually states works to the BP petrol station across the road, so is assumed not to be relevant to the application site.

Other applications 890023 & 890024 seem also to relate to the BP petrol station and are again assumed not to relate to the application site.)

App. No.:	<u>071192</u>	Site Address:	2 Tilehurst Road Reading RG1 7TW	WITHDRAWN
Description:	Single storey rear extension and provision of disabled access			
Received Date:	01/06/2007	Decision Sent Date:	27/11/2007	
		Decision Date:	27/11/2007	
App. No.:	<u>930873</u>	Site Address:	2 Tilehurst Road Reading RG1 7TW	APPROVED
Description:	Change of use from Guest House (partial - 7 rooms) to full guest house(Class C1), including associated landscaping/car parking/grounds improvements			
Received Date:	31/03/1993	Decision Sent Date:	29/07/1993	
		Decision Date:	29/07/1993	
App. No.:	<u>901201</u>	Site Address:	2 Tilehurst Road Reading RG1 7TW	APPROVED
Description:	Formation of one new opening in side boundary wall & improvement to existing opening in same for access closing existing vehicle access for safety.			
Received Date:	09/10/1990	Decision Sent Date:	04/12/1990	
		Decision Date:	04/12/1990	

- 1.4 The property comes outside of any Article 4 Direction area that would otherwise restrict properties being converted to HMO use.
- 1.5 The property has been used as a Guest House user class C1 for 18No rooms since 1993, till present day. There has been a considerable decline in occupations within the last few years due to an increase in hotel accommodation in Reading which has made the operation commercially un-viable, and hence the need to seek alternative avenues in retaining the building in active use.

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Proposal

- 1.6 Planning Permission is sought to change the use of the building from its current use as an 18 bedroom C1 Guest House to that of 18 bedrooms, being a Large House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) (sui generis). The use and activity would be similar both as existing and as proposed, with a minimal adverse impact to neighbours.
- 1.7 A minimal amount of internal alterations are required at basement floor level to introduce an additional shower room so that 7No of the bedrooms at that level are able to share 3No washrooms, and also where an improvement to the floor area to two of the bedrooms can be shared by splitting one room across over the adjacent rooms.
- 1.8 No works to external façade or fenestration are required to the building as a result of the proposed change of use.
- 1.9 The floor areas are noted upon the application drawings, and these confirm that they all achieve in excess of the minimum area for a single occupancy of 6.6m² as is stated by the councils HMO licencing requirements.
- 1.10 The current use of the building is such that no further works would be required to meet the health and safety and fire regulations as already there are installations that would also meet the requirements for a building in multiple occupancy.

Planning policy

- 1.11 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 1.12 The development plan for Reading Borough Council comprises:
 - Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)
 - Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)
- 1.13 The Council is currently in the process of preparing an amended local plan, This plan carries little weight at the time of writing but, nonetheless, doesn't materially alter the test of acceptability.
- 1.14 Material considerations should also be taken into consideration; this includes the National Planning Policy Framework (As amended in 2019) and Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance (SPDs and SPGs) such as the Residential Conversions SPD (2013) and the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011).

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National Policy framework

- 1.15 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of the planning application. It places a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of planning decisions, for which there are three dimensions: economic, social and environmental.
- 1.16 For decision-taking the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that Councils are obliged to approve development that accords with the development plan without delay (paragraph 11).

Principle of development/ Site specific issues

- 1.17 The property has until recently been successfully in use providing accommodation to paying guests for a number of years and there has not been an issue or incident that would detract from the proposed use, which is considered to be very similar, and therefore not being seen as causing harm to the neighbours or its surroundings.

Relevant policies from the READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN- ADOPTED NOVEMBER 2019

- 1.18 Policy CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT states that
- “A positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Where appropriate, the Council will work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible.”
- Also that “Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.
- Planning applications that accord with the policies in the development plan (including, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- Proposed development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- And that where there are no policies relevant to the application or the policies which are most important to determining the application are out of date at the time of making the decision then permission will be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into

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account whether:

- The application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

1.19 Policy CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties. As no changes to the setting and the existing outlook are proposed, and the accommodation is retained as bedrooms there is no impact expected.

1.20 Policy EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. This will include:

- Listed Buildings;
- Conservation Areas;
- Scheduled Monuments;
- Historic parks and gardens; and
- Other features with local or national significance, such as sites and features of archaeological importance, and assets on the Local List.

All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance.

Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.

Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings

1.21 Policy EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.

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1.22 Policy EN4: LOCALLY IMPORTANT HERITAGE ASSETS

Development proposals that affect locally important heritage assets will demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset.

“Planning permission may be granted in cases where a proposal could result in harm to or loss of a locally important heritage asset only where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development significantly outweigh the asset’s significance. Where it is accepted by the Local Planning Authority that retention is not important, recording of the heritage asset should be undertaken and submitted alongside development proposals. Replacement buildings should draw upon heritage elements of the previous design, incorporating historical qualities that made the previous building significant. This may include appearance, scale and architectural quality.

1.23 Although Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) of the adopted Local Plan sets out that proposals for conversion to HMO and flats, it is relevant in the case of this application as it states that:

“Proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing”

And that:

- The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features;
- The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;
- There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;
- There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;
- Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and

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- The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents
- Additionally, in the case of sui generis houses in multiple occupation (HMOs):
 - The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross;
 - There is sufficient communal space.

the principles would apply in this case also, where the proposal seeks to merely change the classification of two very similar uses.

Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access – The application plans show that cycle storage can be provided to the front drive area of the site. The SPD requires “The provision of outdoor cycle storage should have a secure, covered and convenient location” and the enclosure would fulfil these requirements. Bins are currently stored to the front/side of the property and this will not change.

- 1.24 The SPD requires that one communal room should be provided for each 4-6 bedrooms properties. this suggests that more than one communal room should be provided. However, paragraphs 4.8 to 4.10 of the SPD offer some more flexibility depending on the size of the bedrooms and the size of the communal space.

13 of the 18 bedrooms are large rooms which comfortably exceed the room standards and therefore for remaining these 5 bedrooms, only one communal space would be required to satisfy the SPD requirements.

- 1.25 The application property has a large communal room with a distinct kitchen area and living area in it. It is noted that para. 4.9 of the SPD states that “it is not sufficient to have one large room, as with a significant number of residents living together this is considered more likely to result in conflict between the users” however the next part of the same paragraph contradicts that as it says that “it should be assumed that the provision of a communal room is in addition to the provision of a kitchen, particularly where the kitchen provides no seating area or space to relax and is purely a functional area.” In the case of the current arrangement the living area would be separated from the kitchen area.

Amenity & Parking

- 1.26 Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document relates to private and communal outdoor space. There is no guidance for HMOs, however the application property has a good-sized garden which is available for use by the residents. As previously stated, it is good practice to have at least an equivalent garden area to that of the building footprint and this is comfortably met.
- 1.27 The site is located within Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Parking standard required is for 1No parking space per 4 rooms (0.25 per room) and therefore, rounding up to the nearest whole number, this requires the property to have 5 parking spaces. The site plan shows that 5No parking spaces can be accommodated onto the front existing hardstanding drive. The existing use requires 1No space per 2 rooms (0.5 per room) which equates to 9No spaces, and therefore the proposed change of use would relate to a reduction of vehicular movements and thereby a reduced impact to parking provision.
- 1.28 There is no guidance relating to the number of cycles that should be allowed for a Suis Generis HMO, although the closest guidance would be similar to that of a 1bedroom flat, which requires 1 space per 2 dwellings. Therefore space for up to 10 cycles in secure covered storage has been shown as part of the proposals.
- 1.29 The proposed development would not therefore have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network, nor would it have a detrimental impact to the safety of users of the transport network. The policy requirements can be met.

Conclusion

- 1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The proposed development has been carefully considered in the context of all the relevant policy requirements.
- 1.2 The proposal is outside of an Article 4 Direction area and in principle, the change of use is acceptable subject to satisfying all the site specific criteria.

- 1.3 The proposals do not conflict with or impact the historical status of the building or its setting, or for that matter of the conservation area in which the site lies, and seek to retain an activity that is akin to its current use, and thereby seek to promote the upkeep of an asset.
- 1.4 The application complies with all the development plan and guidance requirements applying suitable flexibility on the requirements for communal space.

Paragraph 11 advises that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and explains what this means by advising that Local Planning Authorities should “approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay”.