

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT - Application No. 191798/FUL

Address: 1-2 Wesley Gate Queens Road

Proposal: Roof extension to create four flats above existing office building (which has an unimplemented change of use from B1 to C3 under permitted development)

Case officer: Ethne Humphreys

Target Date: Originally 3/1/2020; Extension of time agreed until 4/9/2020

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application site is a 3 storey building located on the south side of Queens Road. The site is located within an air quality management area and there are 2 TPO trees to the front of the site.

The existing building was granted prior approval for conversion from B1a offices to C3 residential to form 15 units (ref. 181321). This prior approval consent has not been implemented.

Proposal

The application seeks full planning permission for a single storey roof extension to create four flats (4 x 1 bed units). The proposed roof extension would replace the existing pitched roof to this part of the building with a recessed flat roof zinc extension.

Plans Considered

Drawing No: Existing Plans (PD) 2737 025P1

Drawing No: Existing Elevations, Roof Plan, Section 2737 026P3

Received 8/11/2019

Drawing No: 2737 016P3 Proposed Plans Roof Extension

Drawing No: 2737 020P3 Proposed Elevations, Roof Plan, Sections and Details

Received 8/11/2019

Drawing No: 2737 001P8 Location and Block Plan

Received 30/1/2020

Drawing No: 2737 018P1 Proposed Cycle Store

Received 18/2/2020

Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report dated 27 January 2020,
Ref: GHA/DS/124160:20a, received 29/01/20

Tree Protection Plan Rev A dated Nov 2019, received 13/12/19

Construction Method Statement 2737 006HW P1
Received 20/11/2019

Drawing No: Site Plan for CMP 2737 003P1
Received 20/11/2019

Transport Statement Ref 44104/5501
Received 8/11/2019

Design and Access Statement 2737-003
Received 8/11/2019

Noise Impact Assessment Report 19617.NIA.02 Rev A
Received 5th December 2019

Air Quality Assessment Ref: AQ1711 dated January 2020
Received 15th January 2020

Regulations Compliance Report - Flat 16
Predicted Energy Assessment - Flat 16
SAP WorkSheet: New dwelling design stage - Flat 16
DER WorkSheet: New dwelling design stage - Flat 16
Regulations Compliance Report - Flat 17
Predicted Energy Assessment - Flat 17
SAP WorkSheet: New dwelling design stage - Flat 17
DER WorkSheet: New dwelling design stage - Flat 17
Regulations Compliance Report - Flat 18
Predicted Energy Assessment - Flat 18
SAP WorkSheet: New dwelling design stage - Flat 18
DER WorkSheet: New dwelling design stage - Flat 18
Regulations Compliance Report - Flat 19

Predicted Energy Assessment - Flat 19

SAP WorkSheet: New dwelling design stage - Flat 19

DER WorkSheet: New dwelling design stage - Flat 19

Block Compliance Worksheet

SAP Specification Summary

Received 2/6/2020

Relevant Planning History

191683/FUL External alterations to the building. Permitted

191520/OPA Change of use of building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 15 flats. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior Approval Permitted

181321/OPA Change of use of office building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 15 dwelling units. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior Approval Permitted

Nearby Sites - 3-4 Wesley Gate

181671/APPCON Application for discharge of conditions 3 (materials), 5 (construction method statement), 7 (cycle store) and 10 (tree protection) of planning permission 172162. Discharged

172162/FUL Roof extension to create four flats above existing office building (which has an unimplemented change of use from B1 to C3 under permitted development). Permitted subject to S106 Legal Agreement. Under construction at the time of writing.

170314/OPA - Change of use of office building from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 11 X 1-bed and 3 X 2-bed flats. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior Approval Granted

Consultation Responses

Transport: Further to revised plans, no objection, subject to conditions.

Environmental Protection: No objection, subject to conditions.

Trees: Further to additional information, no objection, subject to conditions.

Ecology: No objection.

Public consultation

Wesley Methodist Church, no. 84 Queens Road, Clarendon House 59-75 Queens Road, Units 1 & 2 Wesley Gate Queens Road, 61A, 61B, 61C South Street, Flats 1-6 63 South Street, Flats 1-3 65 South Street, 67 South Street, Flats 1 & 2 69 South Street, Flats 1 & 2 69A South Street, 71 A - D South Street, Flats 1-5 73 South Street, Flats 1-3 75 South Street, 75 South Street and Flats 1 - 3 77 South Street were notified and a site notice was displayed.

No neighbour letters of representation have been received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

The agent was advised of concerns relating to the landscaping and transport. Further to revised plans/additional information, no further objection from the Transport or Natural Environment Officers subject to conditions.

No formal pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission of this specific application.

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 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

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'. For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019), which fully replaces the Core Strategy, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Reading Central Area Action Plan.

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2018;

National Planning Policy Guidance;

RBC Local Plan 2019

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3: Adaptation 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 CC9: Securing Infrastructure

Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Policy EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Policy EN15: Air Quality

Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

Policy H1: Provision of Housing

Policy H2: Density and Mix

Policy H3: Affordable Housing

Policy H5: Housing Standards

Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

Policy TR1: Achieving The Transport Strategy

Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities

Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Policy CR2: Design in Central Reading

Policy CR6: Living in Central Reading

Other

Supplementary Planning Document: Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Conversions (2013)

Supplementary Planning Document: Affordable Housing (2013)

Supplementary Planning Document: Sustainable Design and Construction (2011)

Supplementary Planning Document: Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)

Appraisal

Principle of Development/Land Use Matters

The NPPF (2019) encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The accessibility of the site is considered acceptable for the proposed development.

Prior Approval has been given for the change of use of the existing building (application ref 191520) and the proposed roof extension would replace the existing roof void, with no loss of office accommodation (under this application).

Furthermore, it is considered that the principle of providing residential use at the site is acceptable in that this aligns with the broad objectives of Policy H1. More specifically, the proposals would assist the Borough in meeting its annual housing targets.

Policy CR6 states that all proposals for residential development within the central area will be required to contribute towards a mix of different sized units with the in development. Ideally, a mix of one, two and three bedroom should be provided. Policy H2 also details that developments should provide an appropriate range of housing opportunities. Whilst the proposal is for 4 x 1 bed flats only, as a small conversion scheme in existing roof space, combined with the central location of the site, in this specific

instance the unit mix is considered acceptable. However, the proposals must be appropriate in all other aspects (which is detailed further below).

Design, Impact on the Character of the Area and Setting of Adjacent Listed Buildings and Conservation Area

Policy CC7 requires all development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located. The various components of development form include layout, landscape, density and mix, scale - height and massing and architectural detail and materials.

Policy CR2 seeks to secure appropriate relationships between buildings, spaces and frontages within the centre of Reading.

Policy EN1 states that historic features and areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced.

Policy EN3 states that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF 2019 details that decisions should ensure that developments are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping and are sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment

The application site (No.s 1 - 2) forms parts of a larger building of symmetrical appearance. It is proposed to replace the existing roof with a modern single storey flat roof extension, which would clearly alter the appearance of the building. It is acknowledged, however, that the existing building and roof form are not considered to be of any particular architectural merit and there are a range of flat roof additions to the roofs of surrounding properties. In particular, Havell House, which adjoins the building to the west, has a large prominent roof addition whilst Queens Wharf opposite the site has a significant recessed roof level of accommodation.

The proposed roof extension would be slightly lower than the existing roof to be replaced and this, combined with the set back of the extension from existing eaves level of the main roof to both the front and rear of the building results in a suitably subservient addition that does not appear overtly prominent. In this respect, the proposals would be

similar in design and appearance to that approved at the adjacent 3-4 Wesley Gate (application 172162). Indeed, it would incorporate the same set-back and proposed materials. Furthermore, should both permissions be constructed, it would also afford a symmetry to the two parts of the wider building.

Given the range of roof forms and styles of building to this part of the street-scene together with the subservient nature of the addition and use of high quality materials (zinc) - and the approval at 3-4 Wesley Gate - it is considered that the proposal would integrate satisfactorily with the existing building without resulting in any adverse harm to the character of the wider building or street scene.

The proposal incorporates low level full width glazed balustrades to the front and rear of the building. Queens Wharf opposite the site incorporates balconies at a number of different levels together with a more significant roof top balustrade to the front elevation. The existing building also incorporates a taller metal rail to the front and rear of the roof of the building. The visual impact of the more modest glazed balustrade which is lower in height and set back further from the edge of the roof is therefore considered to be minimal. As above, this would also be similar in appearance to that approved under application 172162 at the adjacent 3-4 Wesley Gate.

To the rear the proposed roof extension incorporates a modest rear dormer like element which projects forward of the main rear elevation of the roof addition further towards the edge of the roof and would house a new stair case up to the roof level of accommodation. This element is itself subservient to the proposed roof extension set lower in height whilst still retaining a set back from the existing eaves level and is not considered to appear unduly prominent or harmful (and as per that approved under application 172162).

The application site is located close to Wesley Method Church (to the west) which is grade II listed and also No. 84 Queens Road which forms part of the curtilage listing of the church. The site is located outside of the Eldon Square Conservation Area but the Conservation Area boundary is located close to the south and east of the site. The building is only visible from very limited views from within the Conservation Area between the buildings to the rear of the site along South Street and given the modest nature of the addition it is not considered that the proposal would result in any adverse harm to the character of the conservation area which would be preserved. Similarly, the subservience of the roof addition and use of high quality materials is considered to preserve the setting

of the Wesley Methodist Church listed building. In this respect, the proposals, which are near on identical to that approved under application 172162 (3-4 Wesley Gate) are located further away from the listed building.

Material details have been annotated on the proposed plans. This level of detail is considered to be satisfactory and it is noted that the same materials were submitted and considered acceptable under application 181671 (discharge of conditions) relating to the scheme at the adjoining 3-4 Wesley Gate. In this specific instance, samples are not considered necessary and the standard plans condition will ensure that the proposed materials will be implemented in accordance with the details specified at application stage.

With this condition secured and in light of the above, it is considered that the proposals would not adversely harm the character of the surrounding streetscape or give rise to an overly dominant or incongruous addition to the immediate area such to warrant a refusal.

The proposal is considered to accord with Policies CR2, CC7 and EN1.

Amenity of Surrounding Occupiers

Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers whilst Policy EN16 seeks to ensure development is not harmful in terms of pollution.

The proposal would not exceed the height of the existing roof to be replaced and given the nature of the alterations to the roof and distance to nearby properties it is not considered to result in any material loss of light or overbearing impact. A distance of over 22m would be retained to neighbouring windows both to the front and rear of the property. This would accord with Policy CC8 and is not considered to result in any overlooking or loss of privacy.

Furthermore, with regard to noise, the Council's Environmental Protection Team have raised no objection in this respect.

Given the proposed units will be self-contained flats (rather than single dwellinghouses), they will not benefit from permitted development rights and therefore this also protects nearby occupiers in the future too. As such in overall terms, considering all nearby

residential occupiers, no significantly harmful amenity impacts would occur, subject to conditions and in compliance with Policy CC8.

Standard of Residential Accommodation

Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) seeks that all new building housing is built to high standards. Policy EN16 (Pollution and Water Resources) seeks to protect future occupiers from the impacts of pollution and Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) seeks that residential developments area provided with adequate private or communal outdoor amenity space.

The units sizes proposed, albeit slightly irregular in shape, are considered to be satisfactory whilst all habitable rooms would have suitable outlook and daylighting (similar to that approved under application 172162 (3-4 Wesley Gate)).

Policy H10 seeks that residential proposals are served by appropriate levels of private or communal amenity space. The policy acknowledges that flats in central Reading will not require the same amount of outdoor spaces as houses in other parts of the Borough. Private balcony areas are proposed for each unit. Given the town centre location of the site and access to nearby public amenities it is considered that in this instance the provision of private balconies only as amenity space is considered adequate, not uncommon for town centre residential development and is not considered to unduly compromise the overall quality of accommodation proposed in this central area location.

The application site is located adjacent Queens Road, one of the busiest routes in and out of Reading Town Centre and a noise assessment has been submitted with the proposals. Environmental Protection Officers have reviewed the noise assessment and are satisfied that the glazing and ventilation specification proposed within it would meet the required internal noise levels for future occupiers.

Appropriate internal noise insulation between future neighbour occupiers of the proposed development would be secured under building regulation requirements.

In respect of air quality, the proposals include mechanical ventilation to be fitted to the flats with air intake at roof level away from the source of pollution. Environmental Protection Officers are satisfied that future occupiers would be served by suitable air quality levels, with no further mitigation required.

Similarly, in terms of noise, vibrations, dust and fume considerations, comments from Environmental Protection confirms that during the construction phase, and subsequently, the proposals will be acceptable subject to a variety of conditions for any permission.

Therefore, in overall terms and having applied a critical planning balance to the consideration of the scheme as a whole, the units are considered to provide an overall suitable standard of accommodation, in line with Policies EN16, H5 and H10 in particular.

Natural Environment

Policy EN12 seeks that development proposals should retain and protect features of biodiversity whilst Policy EN14 seeks to protect trees from damage or removal.

The two trees on the frontage are subject to TPO 31/10. Further to initial concerns raised by the Council's Tree Officer, a revised Arboricultural and Planning Integration Report has been submitted as part of the application. There is no objection subject to conditions.

The Council's Ecologist has reviewed the application and given the sites location away from known bat commuting or foraging habitat and roof form of the existing building has advised that it is unlikely the proposals would adversely impact upon protected species and there is no objection on ecology grounds.

The proposal is considered to accord with Policies EN12 and EN14.

Transport

Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5 seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

The site is located on Queens Road (A329) which is a major transport corridor into Reading and located within the Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which is an area at the very heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments, with limited residential. This area is well served by rail and bus links and also contains the largest proportion of public. The site is accessed through an archway between units 2 and 3 directly off Queens Road.

The proposal submitted for application 181321 (PD) was for 15 units. Transport comments provided for this application agreed that given the site is located in close proximity to

Zone 1 of the Councils parking standards and design SPD(0.5 parking spaces per dwelling) could be applied and therefore a reduced provision was deemed acceptable.

This application seeks to create an additional 4 flats in a roof extension, therefore in accordance with the Councils current adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the proposed new units would be required to provide 4 parking spaces. The submitted Design and Access Statement states that 4 parking spaces will be provided for the new 1 bedroom dwelling which is acceptable.

It is recommended that parking for disabled people should not be more than 50m from the entrance to the building (100m if the route is covered). Disabled car parking spaces should be 2.4m x 4.8m plus 1.2m clearance or a footway to the side and to the rear of the space. This is in accordance with "The Building Regulations 2000: Approved Document M- Access to and Use of Buildings.

The Councils Residential Parking Permit Scheme operates in the surrounding streets; therefore, the applicant should be advised that if the application is approved, the appropriate parking conditions and informatives will be applied to prevent any future occupants of the development from obtaining resident or visitor parking permits for the surrounding residential streets where parking is under considerable pressure. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.

In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a minimum of 0.5 cycle parking spaces for each of the new dwellings which should be in a conveniently located, lockable, covered store. The Design and Access Statement states that vertical cycle storage units are proposed. This type of unit, however, is not acceptable (and as was advised under application 191683). Revised plans were received showing 2 cycle space within a secure bike storey on a Sheffield stand which is appropriate and will be secured via a compliance condition.

A Construction Method Statement and Plan has been submitted with the application which is acceptable and as such a compliance condition shall be attached, rather than pre-commencement.

Subject to conditions, the proposal is not considered detrimental in terms of transport implications and to accord with Policies TR1, TR3 and TR5.

Sustainability

In term of sustainability, the Design and Access Statement highlights a number of welcome measures. Notwithstanding the above, Policy H5 'Housing Standards' requires that all new build housing integrate additional measures for sustainability. In light of this conditions are recommended to ensure the development meets the following requirements:

- Higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person per day; and
- A 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements

During the course of the application the applicant submitted energy assessments confirming that the scheme is designed to meet 19% improvement over building regulation energy requirements. However, a prior to occupation condition will still be required in order to show that the development has been built to meet these energy requirements in practice.

Although secured by planning condition, these new requirements will be administered through the Building Regulations. Confirmation of compliance will need to be submitted to the LPA to discharge the condition. The proposal is considered to accord with Policies CC2 and H5.

Affordable Housing

Whilst the proposal relates to part conversion of the existing roof space this is facilitated by extensions in order to provide 4 residential units and therefore a 10% contribution towards off-site affordable housing provision is required as part of the application in accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

The applicant has agreed to a Policy compliant contribution of £49,666, as verified as accurate, which will be secured via S106 Legal Agreement. With this secured, the proposal is considered to comply with Policy H3 and is a key tangible benefit to the scheme.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. The applicant has provided the appropriate CIL Additional Information Form. An informative

would be attached to the decision notice to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect. Based on the information provided, this is estimated to amount to £29,659.86 (188.7m2 of the proposed dwellings x £120 per m2 x 2020 indexation (£157.18)).

Other Issues

In relation to planning conditions, in line with section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended), which came into force on 01/10/18, discussions have been undertaken with the applicant regarding pre-commencement conditions. Whilst conditions in respect of material samples and energy requirements were originally proposed to be attached to any planning permission, these details were submitted during the course of the application and considered acceptable. As such, compliance conditions will be attached instead of pre-commencement conditions.

Conclusion

In overall terms the planning merits of the proposals (including the provision of an affordable housing financial contribution) are considered to be acceptable within the context of national and local planning policies, as detailed in the appraisal above. Ultimately, when applying an overall critical planning balance of all material considerations, the benefits are considered to outweigh the conflicts. As such, full planning permission is recommended for approval, subject to conditions and completion of the S106 Legal Agreement.

RECOMMENDATION:

Grant Planning Permission subject to conditions and the completion of a s106 legal agreement to secure a £49,666 financial contribution towards affordable housing.