

DELEGATED REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 190727

Address: 83-85 London Street, Reading

Proposal: Single storey rear extension infilling undercroft to create new 1 bedroom flat and replacement of front windows.

Applicant: Colony Architects Ltd

Deadline: Extension of time agreed to 31 January 2020

INTRODUCTION

The application site comprises a three-storey terraced building on the eastern side of London Street. The building is located in the Market Place/London Street Conservation Area and the building was last used for B1(a) offices. The site has been granted/ is in the progress of conversion of all other parts of the building to C3 dwellings under prior approval reference 181880/OPA.

PROPOSAL

The proposal includes infilling of the undercroft area to the rear of the site to provide one additional dwelling.

PLANNING HISTORY

181880/OPA - Change of use from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 18 X 1-bed dwellings. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015.
APPROVED

CONSULTATIONS

Internal

Ecology - No objections to conditions.

Waste - The proposed development would provide adequate bin store for the number of flats. Residents would be responsible for moving the bins out for collection days.

Natural Environment officer - No objection subject to conditions to ensure appropriate landscaping

Environmental protection officers - No objections subject to conditions.

Transport - No objection subject to conditions

Public

Neighbouring properties were consulted by letter, and a site notice was erected, including a second site notice when the proposal was altered to include the replacement of windows within the main façade.

No comments have been received.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

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) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

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 buildings and conservation areas, the setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

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 relevant policies are:

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

CC1:	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC2:	Sustainable Design and Construction
CC3:	Adaptation to Climate Change
CC5:	Waste Minimisation and Storage
CC6:	Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
CC7:	Design and the Public Realm
CC8:	Safeguarding Amenity
CC9:	Securing Infrastructure
EN1:	Protection and enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3:	Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN6:	New Development in a Historic Context
EN15:	Air Quality
EN16:	Pollution and Water Resources
H1:	Provision of Housing
H2:	Density and Mix
H3:	Affordable Housing
H5:	Standards for New Housing
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

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Affordable Housing (2013)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Amenity
- Design consideration and effect on character
- Transport
- Sustainability
- Affordable Housing
- Other Matters

Principle of development

The proposal is for the conversion of an undercroft loading/parking area to the rear of no's 83-85 London Street to form a 1-bed flat. The undercroft area (subject of application) serviced the B1(a) use. The area would no longer be required under the OPA (which is currently underway).

The site is located within close proximity to the Reading town centre.

The Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 sets a target of 15,847 homes in the period from 2013-2026. The provision of an additional dwelling in this location is considered appropriate and would assist the Borough in meeting its housing need.

Amenity

The application site was last in use as a B1(a) office use. The prior approval as mentioned above would result in the change of use of the remainder of the building to form 18 flats.

Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) states that: *“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties”*.

The Agent has confirmed by e-mail on 23 January 2020, the conversion works under application 181880 are currently underway. As such, it is considered that the future use of the building as offices would be unlikely.

Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers whilst Policy EN16 seeks to ensure development is not harmful in terms of pollution. In this instance, the proposed development would have a single aspect (having only one window to the rear for outlook and access to daylight/sunlight). The development would also be serviced by a small area of private garden space. The proposal includes almost full width and full height glazing to the rear. The elevation faces directly East, as such would benefit from the morning sunlight although this would be limited in the afternoon. The proposal would maximise the opportunity for daylight/sunlight to the proposed dwelling which is considered acceptable in this regard.

In relation to the privacy of future occupants, the development would have a significant amount of glazing directly onto the car parking area for the rest of the building. The development includes a private landscaped terrace area outside of this window. As this is the primary outlook and access to daylight and sunlight of importance, appropriate planting to this terrace would be the most appropriate

option to protect future residents and retain as much outlook as practicably possible. This can be secured and monitored by appropriate condition and therefore the development is considered acceptable in this regard.

In relation CC8, specifically, noise and disturbance, pollution, outlook, vibration, and crime and safety. The proposed development is considered acceptable in these regards.

Policy H5 requires that all new development meet the nationally described space standards. The proposed dwelling is in excess of this and is acceptable in this regard.

Design Considerations and effect on character

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks that development proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the surrounding area and Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 seek to protect and enhance the appearance of conservation areas.

The subject building is not a listed building, although it is prominent within the streetscene of London Street, and is identified as a building of townscape merit within the conservation area appraisal (Market Place/London Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2007).

The proposed development would include the replacement of the windows within the front elevation to modern timber frames windows with a replica design and appearance to provide additional insulation. The proposed replacement windows, with a sample window picture provided below, would replicate the style of the existing windows (window bar sizes, panel sizes, and materials) and as such would remain in keeping with the appearance of the Conservation Area.



The proposed development includes an amended elevational treatment to the rear of the building, including rendering, aluminium windows and timber cladding to the ground floor (the proposed infilling). The infilling works and the associated

elevational changes, would not materially affect views of the building, nor are the views from the rear primary views of the Conservation Area, or the adjacent listed buildings. In addition, the proposed works would improve the appearance of the building as viewed from the rear which is lacking in fenestration, articulation, and appropriate materials. As such, it is considered that the proposal would improve the appearance of the building within the proximity of the adjoining listed building, and the Conservation Area as a whole.

Transport

Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Local Plan seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

Given the site's close proximity to the centre of Reading, access to public transport connections, and other facilities within the town centre, it is considered that the site is located in a sustainable location. The surrounding road network all have parking restrictions preventing on-street parking, therefore, a reduction in the residential parking provision is considered acceptable and will not lead to on street parking being detrimental to road safety.

Sustainability

Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) states that new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations. In addition, this policy sets a higher water efficiency standard for all new dwellings. These requirements will be secured by condition.

Affordable Housing

In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) the proposed development, being for 1 additional dwelling unit, would be liable for an off-site affordable housing contribution. A financial contribution of £10,000, calculated using the formula set out in the SPD, is proposed. The figure has been confirmed by the Council's valuations team and has been agreed by the applicant.

Other Matters

CIL

The proposed development would result in the infilling of a space enclosed by three walls, and as such would not, in CIL terms, result in any additional floor space, as such the additional demand would be wholly offset by the existing credit.

CONCLUSION

This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and Supplementary Planning Documents. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to conditions and the required legal agreement.