

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

SITE ADDRESS: 14 Ainsdale Crescent, Reading

APPLICATION NUMBER: 190865/FUL

PROPOSAL: Conversion of C3 dwellinghouse dwelling house into 2x 2 bed flats. Part retrospective application for a single storey rear extension.

CASE OFFICER: Anthony Scholes

DETERMINATION DATE: 23 August 2019

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The site relates to a semi-detached residential dwelling with an attached single garage, and is accessed from Ainsdale Crescent. Ainsdale Crescent is characterised by a predominantly semi-detached dwellings. The subject site is backed onto by Hastings Close, which contains three attached residential properties.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission to for the proposed conversion of the existing dwelling to 2 flats (2x 2 bed). One two bed unit would be located on the ground floor, and the second two bed unit over the first floor and second floor.

Discussions with agent/applicant

The agent has been contacted on a number of occasions regarding amendments to the original proposal in relation to amenity space, and stacking. Revisions have been accepted to make the scheme more acceptable.

Relevant Planning History

190407/PREAPP - Pre-application advice for the change of use of premise from C3 (dwellinghouse) to 2 x C3 (dwellinghouses) comprising 2 x 2-bed flats

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Transport - No objection, subject to conditions and informatives.

EP - No objection, subject to conditions and informatives.

Notification letters regarding the application were sent to neighbouring properties. Several letters have been received and matters raised are summarised below:

- Impact on character of area from change of use;
- Transport and parking impacts;
- Amenity impacts;
- Building works has begun;
- Fencing will encroach on RBC land;

Equalities Act

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. 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 POLICIES AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Legal and Planning Policy Context

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'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

In this regard the NPPF allows full weight to be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) until March 2013. The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material planning considerations.

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy (Adopted January 2008, updated 2015)

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS2 Waste Minimisation
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS14 Provision of Housing
- CS15 Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix
- CS18 Residential Conversions
- CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
- CS24 Car / Cycle Parking
- CS34 Pollution and Water Resources
- CS35 Flooding

Sites and Detailed Policies Document - (Adopted October 2012)

- DM1 Adaptation to Climate Change
- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM6 Affordable Housing
- DM8 Residential Conversions
- DM9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
- DM10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- DM12 Access, Traffic and Highway Related Matters

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (adopted October 2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted July 2011)

Residential Conversions SPD (adopted November 2013)

Design guide to House Extension (Adopted May 2003)

APPRAISAL

Principle

The NPPF states that “the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies”, it also encourage efficient use of land taking into account: identified need for housing, local market conditions, the availability and capacity of infrastructure, the desirability of maintaining the existing character of the area, and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive, and healthy places. The RBC LDF supports the provision of additional dwelling units to meet the requirement for additional dwelling per annum. CS18 (Residential conversions) states that “proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats ... will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area”.

Policy CS15 refers to the appropriate mix of residential development. This is assessed on a site by site basis taking into account the characteristics of the area in which it is located. The site is located on previously developed land and already in use as a single residential dwelling. As such the principle of the proposed development could be acceptable subject to the following material planning considerations.

The proposal would accord with the Residential Conversions SPD in that whilst the existing dwelling does not have 4 or more bedrooms, it does have a total floor area of more than 120m² when built.

At least one unit of accommodation created would be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms (two, two bedroom units are proposed) and in terms of housing mix, the proposed 2 x 2 bed flat is considered acceptable.

Moreover, the provision of an additional residential unit will assist in the Council meeting its annual housing targets (policy CS14).

(Policies CS15, CS18 and CS14 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015) and DM8 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015) and the Residential Conversions SPD 2013).

Design Considerations

The external alterations to the main façade include the removal of the existing garage treatments, and replacement with a doorway to the upper flat. These works are considered minor and are to be clad in matching materials to those of the existing dwelling. The conversion to flats would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the physical character of the surrounding area.

To the rear of the dwelling, the single storey rear extension as constructed, and measuring 3.375m in depth, is longer than a permitted development extension (3m), and therefore required permission. A number of representations have raised issues with the fact that building works have commenced prior to any approval/notification. As works are internal, and for permitted development works can be undertaken without the express permission by the LPA, it is not considered that this matter is material to the consideration of this planning permission.

The supplementary planning document 'design guide to house extensions' states that 4m rear extensions are considered to be the maximum depth for a rear extension subject to retaining a sufficient depth of garden space, and sufficient penetration of daylight and sunlight. In this instance, the proposed rear extension of 3.375m as constructed is not considered to be excessive in depth, and result in a significant loss of amenity space to the rear, nor would it restrict daylight/sunlight reaching the internal areas of the ground floor flat. Additionally, the extension is built adjacent to an extension at no.12 Ainsdale Crescent. It would extend slightly further than this extension, however would not be detrimental in terms of access to daylight, sunlight, or be overbearing or result in a loss of outlook for no. 12.

Impact on Neighbours

The proposal has been amended with respect to other matters and will result in the first floor dwellings kitchen to be adjacent to the shared wall. Although neighbours have raised concerns over location of upstairs rooms in relation to the proposal, it is unlikely that the noise or vibration impacts of the proposed development would be significantly different to that of a normal relationship between residential properties.

Quality of Amenity for Future Occupiers

All habitable rooms would be served by suitable daylighting, outlook and room sizes such as to provide a suitable standard of residential amenity for future occupiers, this includes bedroom 2 on the ground floor, which has been provided with a small rear amenity space to avoid the potential of views into the room from the amenity space of the other flat.

In terms of rear garden amenity space, both dwellings are considered to enjoy adequate outdoor amenity space.

Room stacking is considered acceptable and the appropriate insulation would be a requirement of building regulations, and has been demonstrated in this application for convenience.

Sustainability

Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, supported by the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD seeks the proposal, as a 'creation of new residential units through conversion', to comply with BREEAM Level of 'Very Good'. It is considered acceptable to deal with this matter by way of a suitably worded condition to require a final BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment certificate to be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority prior to occupation of the dwellings.

Transport

The proposed development is located within zone 3 as identified within the revised parking standards SPD. The proposed development would be required to provide 2 parking spaces per flat. The proposal includes provision of 2 parking spaces by use of the existing dropped kerb. The retention of the existing access and boundary treatments is considered acceptable in terms of policy CS7, and in accordance with the residential conversions SPD. Additionally, the under provision of car parking in this instance is considered to comply with Policy CS4 which seeks to encourage reduction in car use within the borough, and due to the proximity of the site to high frequency bus routes, and the average car ownership in the area is 0.89 vehicles per 2+ person flat. Therefore, the provision of 1 space per flat is deemed acceptable.

Affordable Housing & CIL

The proposal relates to the conversion of an existing property and therefore is excluded from the requirements of Policy DM6 and no affordable housing contribution is required in this specific instance. Accordingly, no S106 legal agreement is required either.

The proposal is not liable for CIL - the existing building has been and is currently occupied as a residential dwelling.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Full Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives