

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: 14 Franklin Street

Application No: 182234 / FUL

Proposal: Proposed loft conversion with dormers to the rear and roof windows to the front elevation.

Applicant: Kennet Investments Ltd

Date received (valid from): 19/12/2018

Target Decision date: 13/02/2019

Agreed Extension of Time: 15/03/2019

Case officer: Tom French

1. Site description and Surrounding Area

The application site relates to a two storey mid-terrace dwelling on the west side of Franklin Street. The application property has a ground floor bay window to the front elevation and an associated rear amenity area approximately 5m deep and 5m wide.

The surrounding area is predominantly residential with terrace properties of a similar scale and design to the application property.

The application building is not listed, but is located within the Russel Street / Castle Hill conservation area.

2. The Proposal

Planning permission is sought two pitched roof rear dormers and two roof lights to the front roof slope, to facilitate a loft conversion.

Each of the proposed dormers would have a height of 1.7m, would project 2.6m from the rear roof slope and would have a width of 1.4m. The dormer would be set down from the ridge by 0.2m and would be set back from the eaves by 1.5m.

During the course of the application the scheme was revised from a single dormer to two rear dormers.

3. Consultation

Neighbours consultation:

No.s 12 & 16 Franklin Street and 17 Clifton Street have been notified of the application and a site notice has also been displayed at the site.

A representation was made on behalf of the Bakers Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA) objecting to the proposal on the following basis:

- None of the roofs in that entire block of historic period properties has windows in any street facing roof and so the street roof scape still retain their original uniform and harmonious appearance.

- Within the surrounding area any loft windows have been limited to roof lights set in the slope of the rear roof only so that no roof light is visible from a public highway.
- This application is different in that it would introduce street-facing roof lights together with a rear roof dormer window which would be architecturally disharmonious with the rest of the terraces in the block and, if allowed, would set a most undesirable precedent.
- The refusal of this application is now particularly important in the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area which has recently been listed by Historic England as being a Conservation Area "at risk"

The RBC Heritage Consultant provided a consultation response objecting to the principal of rear dormers and front roof lights in this location.

4. Plans and Documents Considered

The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following plans & documents:

Drawing No.:

- FS:001 - Site and Block Plans
- FS:002 - Site Location Plan
- FS:103 - Floor Plans Existing & Proposed
- FS:105 - Existing Elevations
- FS:106 - Proposed Elevations
- Design & Heritage Statement

As received: 19/12/2018

- FS:103 Rev. A - Floor Plans Existing & Proposed
- FS106 Rev. B - Proposed Elevations

As received: 21/02/2019

5. Relevant Planning History

182050 - CLP - Certificate of Lawfulness for proposed loft conversion with new dormers and roof windows - Application Withdrawn

6. 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.

7. Relevant Planning 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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Development Framework '*Core Strategy*' 2008 (Altered 2015) and '*Sites and Detailed Policies Document*' 2012 (Altered 2015).

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ('NPPF') 2012 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The 'NPPF' states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) according to their degree of consistency with the 'NPPF' (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the 'NPPF', the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the 'NPPF' and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

8. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework;

National Planning Policy Guidance;

RBC Local Development Framework

Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

CS7 Design and the Public Realm

CS33 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

DM4 Safeguarding Amenity

DM9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

Other relevant guidance

Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (2004)

9. Appraisal

The main issues to be considered are:

- Impact on the host dwelling and surrounding area
- Impact on neighbouring amenity

Impact on the host dwelling and surrounding area

Whilst not listed, the application site is within the Russell Street / Castle Hill conservation area. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area Act) 1990 requires that: 'with respect of any building or other land in a conservation area ... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'. This is consistent with Policy CS7 that states 'All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located'. Further Policy CS33 directs that 'Planning permission will only be granted where development has no adverse impact on historic assets and their setting. All proposals will be expected to protect and where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area in which they are located' and that 'In making decisions on development proposals in Conservation Areas, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that particular area'.

The application property forms part of the terrace that runs along the west side of Franklin Street. At least in part, the character of the street is derived from the consistent and uniform nature of the terrace row with each property being of a similar scale, design and architectural interest. This uniformity extends to the roof scape, with the front roof slope of the terrace being entirely unbroken and the only incursions into the rear roof slope being various roof lights that are modest in terms of scale and impact. As such, the unbroken and not significantly altered roof scape is a feature of value to the building as a whole. It is therefore considered that the proposed protrusions (rear dormers) and alterations (front roof lights) of the otherwise uninterrupted roof is harmful to the character of the host building in terms of design and scale, in addition to an in-principle concern relating to location; the proposal is not considered to be high quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of this area of Reading.

Whilst there are some examples of front dormers along Franklin Street, there are no dormers to the rear roof slope and no examples of roof lights (or other alterations) to the front roof slope. Within the general vicinity, rear dormers are not an established feature and it is a feature of the terrace that the front roof slope remains unaltered and unbroken; therefore the principle of both external elements of the proposal is not considered appropriate in this location. The proposed development is considered out of place and wholly out of character within the context of the roof scape of the terrace and the wider conservation area. With reference to the rear dormers it is considered that the bulk and massing set against an otherwise unbroken roof slope - aside from the more modest roof lights - would appear incongruous and visually jarring additions.

The proposed roof lights would be visible from the street scene along Franklin Street and would represent the only incursions into an otherwise unaltered roof scape (on this side of the terrace). Given the highly visible location, the additional sensitivity of the application site being within a conservation area and the local context of the entirely unaltered roof slope; the relatively modest scale of the proposal is not considered sufficient to adequately mitigate the harmful impact of the proposed roof lights.

As such the proposed development cannot be considered to respect the character and pattern of the host dwelling or surrounding area in terms of scale, location or design. Further, the proposal is not considered to respond positively to the local contest or respect the form of the area local to the application site.

For the reasons noted above, it is concluded that the proposal is to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area and cannot be considered to preserve, enhance or make a positive contribution to the quality of the townscape within the conservation area.

The proposal does not accord with Policy CS7, CS33 or DM9.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

The proposed dormers and roof lights would not have any adverse effects on the amenity or living environment of the neighbouring or nearby properties. The proposal accords with Policy DM4. The proposal would also improve the quality of accommodation for current and future occupiers.

In applying a planning balance, the merits of the scheme (solely considered to be improving the quality of accommodation for current and future occupiers) are not considered to outweigh the harmful impacts identified above. Therefore, the proposal is not able to be supported and is instead refused planning permission.

10. Recommendation

REFUSE planning permission

The proposed rear dormer extensions and front roof lights, by reason of their location, bulk and mass, would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the host building, street scene and wider Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation Area. As such the proposed development is contrary to Policies CS7 and CS33 of the Reading Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2008 (altered 2015) and Policy DM9 of the Reading Borough Council Local Development Framework Sites and Detailed Policies 2012 (altered 2015).

Informatives

1. The decision relates to the following drawings:

Drawing No.:

- FS:001 - Site and Block Plans
- FS:002 - Site Location Plan
- FS:105 - Existing Elevations
- Design & Heritage Statement by Rammurtti Design Ltd

As received: 19/12/2018

- FS:103 Rev. A - Floor Plans Existing & Proposed

- FS106 Rev. B - Proposed Elevations

As received: 21/02/2019

2. The local planning authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to see if relevant concerns could be resolved to allow permission to be granted. However, that has not been possible and therefore the decision to refuse planning permission has been taken.