

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

SITE ADDRESS: 313 Basingstoke Road, Reading

APPLICATION NUMBER: 190869/FUL

PROPOSAL: Subdivision of an existing detached dwellinghouse into two separate flats and for the installation of two windows located on the south side elevation of the dwellinghouse.

CASE OFFICER: Anthony Scholes

DETERMINATION DATE: 23 August 2019

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The site relates to a detached property on the Eastern side of Basingstoke Road. The area is characterised by large properties on along Basingstoke Road which have been converted into flats, with single dwelling houses further away from Basingstoke Road.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission to for the proposed conversion of the existing dwelling to 2 flats (2x 3 bed). One three bed flat would be located on the ground floor, and the second three bed unit over the first floor and second floor, which includes use of the second floor ancillary to the use of the first floor.

Discussions with agent/applicant

The agent has been contacted on a number of occasions regarding amendments to the original submission. Notably, the original proposal included the conversion of the property to three flats, which included a flat wholly within the loft/second floor. Due to concerns over head heights within this area, the proposal has been amended for two flats. The revision is considered to be less impactful than that of three dwellings and would not warrant a further formal consultation.

Relevant Planning History

07-00465-FUL (070092) - Change of use from commercial to residential and change to frontage
Approved June 2007

07-01192-FUL (071043) - Change of use from existing domestic property to day care centre for up to 40 children under 5 years old on the ground floor WITHDRAWN 18 December 2007

90-00654-FUL (900934) - Construction of a first floor extension at the rear REFUSED 24 October 19990

91-00153-FUL (910800) - Discharge of conditions CONDITIONS DISCHARGED 10 February 1992

91-00699-FUL (911045) - Erection of first floor extension to create three bedrooms to self-contained flat above. APPROVED 6 September 1994

92-00271-FUL (920161) - Insertion of two dormer windows to front elevation APPROVED 30 April 2019

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. No letters have been received at the date of writing.

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. Although the property has previously been used for a mixed use (commercial at ground floor, and a flat above) most recently it has been converted back to a large dwelling, and at the site visit this was confirmed by layout and facilities. 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 the existing dwelling has 4 or more bedrooms, and 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, three bedroom units are proposed), and would have access to private rear amenity space. In terms of housing mix, the proposed 2 x 3 bed flats is considered acceptable.

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

Design Considerations

No alterations to the main façade, boundary treatments and hardstanding to the front of the property are proposed. The external alterations to the building are limited to the installation of two ground floor windows on the Southern elevation at ground floor.

The proposal includes the subdivision of the rear garden, with the addition of ~1.8m high fencing around the rear amenity for the ground floor, and 2 foot high fencing around the shared amenity space. The proposed garage and rear amenity space are to be communal areas, and accessible to both units. The proposed rear amenity space for flat 1 (ground floor) is acceptable as it would be a private amenity space for the occupiers of one of the ‘family sized units’. Additionally, a condition is recommended for a management plan to ensure appropriate access for both flats to the bicycle storage, outdoors space, parking areas, and bin storage responsibilities.

Impact on Neighbours

The proposal would not result in any additional overlooking, or privacy concerns as a result of the intensification of the use. The proposal would maintain the existing first floor balcony to the rear of the dwelling. This directly overlooks the property to the side (no. 315), which contains a large rear garden caravan. As this situation is not a worsening of the existing situation it would not result in any material loss of privacy to the adjacent dwellings.

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. Although the loft accommodation was deemed not suitable as self-contained accommodation, the integration of the reduced head-height area into the first floor flat is considered acceptable and is only approved as part of the first floor 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 separate requirement of building regulations.

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 proposal includes sufficient on-site parking, bin storage, and bicycle parking, as well as maintaining the existing access arrangements. A condition is recommended to provide these facilities as proposed, and to ensure appropriate management and access to shared facilities for all flats.

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