

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 24/06/2019 (extension of time agreed until 25/06/19)

Application No: 190649/FUL

Address: 52 Norcot Road, Tilehurst, Reading

Proposal: Change of use at ground floor level from beauty salon (Sui Generis) to two flats (1 x one-bed flat and 1 x two bedroom flat) and associated works.

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

The site relates to the ground floor of a two storey mid-terraced building within a strip of non-residential uses at ground floor on Norcot Road. The site is not located within the Tilehurst district centre.

2. Proposal

The proposed development includes a change of use from beauty salon (Sui Generis) to 2 x flats (1 x 1-bed and 1 x 2-bed) and associated works. Specifically, the works include: changes to the main façade to provide 2 additional doors, 2 windows, and an altered access to the existing flat; demolition of a single storey rear extension; internal changes to the access to the first floor flat; bin and bicycle storage; subdivision of rear garden; and landscaping to the front.

During the course of the application the applicant submitted two amended plans, the amendments included moving the bicycle store to the front of the property which required the loss of one parking space, and also included opportunities for landscaping at the front of the property, the applicant submitted two separate sets of amended plans on 14 May. Both plans were referenced with Rev A, for clarity, the applicant was requested to submit amended plans denoted Rev B, on 20 June. Finally, the applicant submitted an elevation plan without landscaping which obscured details of the front elevation on 24 June. None of the changes were of a nature which warranted formal public re-consultation.

3. List of plans and documents considered:

The agent supplied the following, received on 23 April 2019:

Drawing No: 8848 PL-10 - 3D images

Drawing No: 8848 PL-08 - Proposed elevations

Drawing No: 8848 PL-07 - Proposed floor plans

Drawing No: 8848 PL-06 - Proposed site plan

Drawing No: 8848 PL-05 - Existing elevations

Drawing No: 8848 PL-04 - Existing floor plans

Drawing No: 8848 PL-03 - Existing and proposed block plan

Drawing No: 8848 PL-01 - Location plan

The agent supplied amended plans following comments regarding the proposal, received on 14 May 2019:

Drawing No: 8848 PL-08 Rev A - Proposed elevations

Drawing No: 8848 PL-07 Rev A - Proposed floor plans

Drawing No: 8848 PL-03 Rev A - Existing and proposed block plan

And;

Drawing No: 8848 PL-07 Rev A - Proposed floor plans (with amended landscaping)

The agent supplied amended plans following comments regarding the referencing of the proposal plans, received on 20 June 2019:

Drawing No: 8848 PL-08 Rev B - Proposed elevations

Drawing No: 8848 PL-07 Rev B - Proposed floor plans

Drawing No: 8848 PL-03 Rev B - Existing and proposed block plan

Finally, the applicant supplied amended plans following comments on clarity of the elevations, received on 24 June 2019:

Drawing No: 8848 PL-11 - Proposed elevations (plain)

4. Internal Consultations

RBC Transport Development Control

No objections subject to conditions.

RBC Environmental protection

No objections subject to informatives.

5. External Consultees

Neighbours

Consultation letters were sent to the adjoining properties, and the applicant displayed a site notice on the site from 3 May 2019. No comments have been received.

6. Relevant Planning History

130426/FUL - Removal of existing delivery doors and provision of single access door and window to front elevation. Change of use from computer/retail shop to beauty salon
APPROVED 22/05/2013

110789/FUL (11-01228-FUL) - Change of use of existing ground floor shop and office to 1 x 1-bed and 1 x 2-bed flats and first floor rear extension to incorporate the conversion of existing 2 bed-sits into 1 x 1-bed and 1 x 2-bed flats REFUSED 10/10/2011

110038/FUL (11-01758-FUL) - Change of use of the existing ground floor shop and office to one 1-bed and one 2-bed flats plus rear extensions to incorporate the conversion of the 1st floor from 2 bedsits to two 1-bed flats (resubmission of 11/01228/FUL) APPROVED
23/02/2012

7. 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.

8. 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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Development Framework 'Core Strategy' 2008 (Altered 2015).

The 'National Planning Policy framework' ('NPPF') 2019 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).

9. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2019;

National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards;

RBC Local Development Framework

Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

CS1	Sustainable construction and design
CS2	Waste minimisation
CS4	Accessibility and the intensity of development
CS5	Inclusive access
CS6	Settlement boundary
CS7	Design and the public realm
CS14	Provision of Housing
CS15	Location, accessibility, density and housing mixCS20 Implementation of the Reading transport strategy (local transport plan 2006-2011)
CS24	Car/ Cycle Parking
CS29	Provision of Open Space
CS34	Pollution and Water Resources

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

SD1	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
DM1	Adaptation to climate change
DM4	Safeguarding amenity
DM6	Affordable Housing
DM10	Private and communal outdoor space
DM12	Access, traffic and highway-related matters
DM18	Tree planting

Supplementary Planning Documents & other relevant documents/guidance

Revised parking standards and design (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2011)

Affordable Housing SPD (2013)

DCLG Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard (2015)

10. Appraisal

The main issues are considered to be:

- Principle of development
- Design considerations
- Amenity
- Transport
- Sustainability
- Affordable Housing
- CIL

Principle of development

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 Reading Borough Council (RBC) local development framework (LDF) supports the provision of additional dwelling units to meet the requirement for additional dwelling per annum, in accordance with Policy CS14.

The application site is not in the protected shopping frontage of Tilehurst Centre where, in accordance with Policy CS26 of the LDF Core Strategy (2008) and DM13 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (October 2012) the core retail function shall be maintained. It follows that the change of use of the existing beauty salon (sui generis, but retail related) use is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

Design Considerations

The proposed development includes alterations to the façade to convert the existing shopfront into a residential frontage, with the addition of 2 x doors, and windows, including an altered access to the flat above. The windows have been designed to reflect the size of the existing first floor windows to fit the architectural detailing of the host property. Materials have been proposed to match the existing. The proposal includes

landscaping, a bin store, and bicycle store to the front of the property. The landscaping includes low level plating in front of the proposed front windows, and either side of the parking spaces, to provide a softening to the existing hardstanding

In addition, to the rear, the proposal includes the demolition of the existing single storey rear extension, erection of a close boarded fence to subdivide the rear garden for the private use of each flat, and changes to create the openings from each flat to the rear gardens. As the rear alterations are minor in nature and will not be visible from the street, or highly visible from any adjoining properties, the changes are considered acceptable.

The provision of bicycle storage and bin storage at the frontage of the property is considered acceptable, and can be secured by a suitably worded conditions.

Amenity

The plans show a 39m² area for the 1-bed flat, and a 52m² for the 2-bed flat. This meets the nationally-described space standards requirements for the one-bed flat, and is 9m² short for the 2-bed flat. Notwithstanding the shortfall, the 2-bed flat would meet the internal layout of each flat are generally spacious and the large amount of rear amenity space provided for each flat is sufficient.

The proposed layout appears to provide a sufficient amount of daylight, sunlight and outlook to all habitable rooms. The ground floor flats are proposed to contain bedrooms beneath the bathroom of the existing first floor flat. This is considered to be an appropriate stacking of rooms which will not negatively impact the amenity of future residents. The living room and kitchen are directly below the bedrooms of the existing upper floor flats. Although not an ideal location, noise from moving or opening doors and drawers above bedrooms is generally considered more harmful than the proposed situation. As such, is considered appropriate.

The proposed parking layout would result in the loss of 1 parking space, and replacement with landscaping, and areas for bin storage and bike storage to be shielded from view. The current hardstanding (which takes up the full frontage) does not provide an attractive and pleasant appearance, and the replacement with softer elements would improve the appearance of the property. The development is located on a 'premier' bus route (the number 17) which travels every 7 minutes into town during peak times. The applicant has proposed under provision of parking (2 parking spaces) contrary to the Council's adopted parking SPD, in this instance, alternative modes of transport are available, including bus and cycling, as such is considered to be appropriate.

The proposed amenity space provides sufficient outdoor space for future occupiers of the dwelling and would be in keeping with the size of amenity spaces to attached dwellings in the surrounding area (Policy DM11).

Transport

The site currently has a vehicular dropped crossing along the site frontage and this is to be retained providing a total of 2 car parking spaces. It is noted that the proposed parking provision is lower than the Council's adopted Parking Standards but considering the site is located on a frequent premier bus route which provides links between the site and the town centre area, a reduced provision is acceptable. The site is also within walking distance of the Tilehurst Triangle Local Centre which provides numerous local facilities.

Sustainability

Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, supported by the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD seeks that the proposal, as a 'creation of new residential units through conversion', should comply with BREEAM Level of 'Very Good'. Conditions shall be attached to the planning permission to require submission and approval of a design stage BREEAM report prior to commencement of the development and a post construction BREEAM certificate prior to occupation of the development to demonstrate that this level has been met.

Affordable Housing

West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council applied for a judicial review of the Secretary of State's Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) to Parliament in 2014 on changes to national planning policy. Those changes sought to exempt developments of 10 or less dwellings from planning obligations for affordable housing and social infrastructure contributions and to introduce a new measure known as the Vacant Building Credit.

The High Court handed down its judgment on the case on 31st July 2015. The High Court found in favour of the challenge by the local authorities and quashed the amendments to the NPPG. The Secretary of State appealed the judgment and the Court of Appeal has now quashed the decision of the High Court.

Reading Borough Council has been considering its options for implementing its affordable housing policy in the light of this decision.

At its meeting of the Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee on 13th July 2016, the Council discussed the outcome of the Court of Appeal's decision on its challenge (the report can be found [here](#)):

http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5651/Item09-SEPT-C-Report-on-C-of-Appeal-judgement-05-16/pdf/Item09_SEPT_C_Report_on_C_of_Appeal_judgement_05_16.pdf).

Having considered its options, the Committee agreed the following as the basis for determining planning applications where Policy DM6 of the SDPD is relevant:

To implement Policy DM6 as currently adopted in the SDPD but excluding proposals that solely involve the conversion of an existing property, where the conversion involves the provision of 10 or less dwelling units (i.e. not HMOs), or the replacement of dwellings by the same number of replacement dwellings where there is no net increase.

The proposal relates to conversion only and does not seek to extend the property in any way. Therefore, in accordance with amended Policy DM6 the proposal is not be required to make a contribution towards off-site affordable housing.

CIL

The proposal seeks to create 2 new residential dwellings and as such is liable for the Community Infrastructure Levy. However, the proposal seeks to utilise existing floor space only and within the CIL Additional Information Form submitted as part of the application it states that this floor space has been occupied in its lawful use for a continuous period of six months within the last three years. Therefore, the liable floor space would technically be 0m² and no levy is chargeable.

11. Conclusion

Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh in favour of granting consent subject to conditions.

Recommendation

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