

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Application No: 181451/FUL

Address: 29 Manchester Road, Reading

Proposal: Conversion of single dwellinghouse into 2 flats (1x3 & 1x2-bed), including replacement single storey rear extension, south elevation bay window and associated works (amended description).

Case Officer: Ethne Humphreys

Decision Date: Originally 12/11/2019; extension of time agreed until 28/06/2019

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site relates to a two storey end of terrace dwelling (with accommodation in the roof space) located on the south west side of Manchester Road, on the corner with Filey Road.

The immediate character of the area is that of similar terraced rows all of similar design, some of which have been extended.

Proposal:

This is an application for conversion of dwelling to 2 flats (1 x 3bed flat and 1 x2 bed flat). It is proposed to replace the existing single storey rear extension with a slightly larger single storey rear extension and a single storey side extension - bay window (adjacent Filey Road) is proposed. The materials would match those of the host property. Associated works are also shown to be proposed, such as the reconfiguration of on-site vehicular parking, the provision of cycle storage and bin storage areas and soft landscaping on the Manchester Road frontage.

Plans Considered:

Drawing No: Existing and Proposed Plans A 1010 Rev E

Received 21st February 2019

Drawing No: Visibility Splays (Highways) A 1250 Rev A

Received 12th April 2019

Drawing No: Site Location Plan and Block Plan A 1000 Rev B

Drawing No: Existing and Proposed Elevations A 1020 Rev E

Existing and Proposed Roof Plans A 1015 Rev F

Received 22nd May 2019

Drawing No: Existing and Proposed Elevations (Side) A 1025 Rev B

Received 14th June 2019

Relevant Planning History:

None.

Consultation Responses:

Highways Officer: Further to revised plans, no objection subject to conditions and informatives.

Tree Officer: No objection subject to landscaping condition.

Environmental Protection: No objection.

Neighbour letters were sent to No's 27 and 31 Manchester Road and 77 Filey Road; no neighbour letters of representation received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

The agent was advised of concerns relating to the design of the originally proposed two storey extension and first floor extension and parking arrangements. Revised plans were received removing the first floor extension and revising the rear extension from two storey to single storey.

No formal pre-application advice was sought prior to the submission of this application.

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.

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) - 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 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 National Planning Policy Framework (revised most recently earlier in 2019) and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2008 (amended 2015)

- CS1 Sustainable Construction and Design
- CS2 Waste Minimisation
- CS4 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS14 Housing Provision
- CS15 Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix
- CS18 Residential Conversions
- CS20 Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy (Local Transport Plan 2006-2011)
- CS24 Car/Cycle Parking
- CS34 Pollution and Water Resources

Sites and Detailed Policies Document, Oct 2012 (amended 2015)

- SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- DM1 Adaption to Climate Change
- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM6 Affordable Housing
- DM8 Residential Conversions
- DM9 House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation
- DM10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space

RBC Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Supplementary Planning Document: Affordable Housing (July 2013)

Supplementary Planning Document: S106 Planning Obligations (March 2014)

Residential Conversions SPD (2013)

The main issues are:

Appraisal

Principle

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 the existing dwellinghouse has 4 bedrooms and measures more than 120m² (notwithstanding the existing extension). Both units of accommodation created would be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of 2 bedrooms and in terms of the housing mix, the proposed 1x3 bed flat and 1x2 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, Impact on Street Scene and Character of the Area

The plans as originally submitted were, due to the flat roof design of the rear extension, and prominence of the first floor gable extension, considered to result in an incongruous appearance in respect of the host property and the visual amenities of the street scene.

The proposals as revised would require only relatively modest changes to the external appearance of the house, including replacing an existing single storey rear extension with a slightly larger one, which, although visible, would remain subservient to the host property with materials to match which is appropriate. The proposed single storey side extension, given its position adjacent Filey Road, would also clearly be visible in the street scene. However, it would replicate the existing bay window, affording a level of symmetry at ground floor and again would be subservient with materials to match.

The proposed additions, in their revised form, would appear of an appropriate scale and would not represent an overdevelopment of the site (significantly over and above the existing situation), although it is noted that the proposals are likely to represent the upper limit of what might be achievable at the site.

The proposals are not considered to be so incongruous so as to result in any adverse effect on the character of the host property or the visual amenities of the street scene. Indicative landscaping is shown on the plans which is appropriate given the site's prominent corner plot location, and can be secured in practice by way of a pre-commencement condition.

Given the above, the conversion to flats would not have a significantly detrimental impact on the physical character of the surrounding area.

(Policy CS8 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015) and the Residential Conversions SPD 2013).

Impact on Neighbour Amenity

The neighbouring properties potentially affected by the proposals are No. 31 Manchester Road and No. 77 Filey Road, located to the north and west of the site respectively.

In relation to No.77 Filey Road, there are no windows on the flank elevation of this property and no first floor windows proposed to No.29 Manchester Road and as such there would be no material loss of privacy to the occupiers of this property. Whilst the replacement single storey extension would be located closer to No.77, given its position it is not considered to result in any significantly material loss of light or overbearing impacts over and above the current situation.

In relation to No.31 Manchester Road, no windows are proposed facing this property and as such there would be no material loss of privacy. The two storey extension as originally

proposed was, due to its height, considered to result in a loss of light and overbearing impact to the occupiers of No.31. The proposed single storey extension would still have an impact on No.31, due to the increase in depth and height (in the context of the existing extension). However, the extension would drop to reasonably low eaves adjacent the boundary and the roof would be hipped roof away to minimise the impact. It is therefore not considered to result in such an overbearing impact over and above the existing situation such to warrant a refusal.

It is not considered that the intensity of the proposed use would be so great as to be inherently noisy to neighbours.

As such in overall terms, considering all nearby residential occupiers (not just the two properties specifically referenced above - all other nearby occupiers would be too distant for there to be significantly harmful impacts), no significantly harmful amenity impacts would occur, subject to conditions and in compliance with policy DM4.

(Policies DM4 and DM8 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015) and CS18 and CS34 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015) and the Residential Conversions SPD 2013).

Amenity of Future Occupiers

It is considered that the proposals would provide an overall good standard of accommodation throughout with fairly regular shaped rooms providing suitable outlook, natural lighting and ventilation. Whilst the useable space of the second floor bedrooms might be slightly smaller than national spaces standards, this is the same as the existing situation and not considered to be so significant as to make the space unacceptable. The stacking of rooms is considered to be acceptable.

The proposals would not provide any meaningful amenity space (an area of landscaping is shown on the Manchester Road frontage, but this is not of a size which would be usable), with the rear of the site to be wholly functional space for parking, bin and cycle stores. This is not altogether unusual for flats in this location and there are public open spaces nearby. Moreover, the existing dwelling does not have any garden space, with the rear of the site used for car parking. The current and proposed arrangement would not meet policy, but balancing the need for residential accommodation and that there are public open spaces a short distance from the site, the lack of amenity space is not considered to warrant a refusal in these specific circumstances.

(Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015) and Policy CS34 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015) and the Residential Conversions SPD 2013).

Transport Issues

The property is located on the corner of Manchester and Filey Road and is located within Zone 2, Primary Core Area of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD which directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading.

In accordance with the adopted SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space per 1- 2 bedroom flat, equating to a total requirement of 2 off road parking spaces.

Manchester Road and the surrounding road network are located within an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area.

Although the proposed provision of off street parking does not meet with the Councils current standards a lower provision of one parking space is acceptable in this instance due to the on street parking restrictions in place. Highways records indicate that the property currently has 1 resident permit which has been issued this year; however, future occupants of the proposed new dwelling will not be eligible for residential or visitor parking permits (which will be covered by way of condition and informative) which will therefore mitigate the loss of one parking space within the residential bay located outside the proposed new dropped kerb. The applicant may wish to consider an access restriction marking.

Submitted plan illustrate 2 cycle stands located adjacent to the parking area which is in excess of the required provision and have been repositioned to allow for easier access.

Transport does not have any objections subject to conditions and informatives.

(Policies CS20 and CS24 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015) and DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, altered 2015) and the Residential Conversions SPD).

Natural Environment

There are no significant tree or landscape features to be affected by the proposals. However, indicative landscaping has been shown on the plans which will require approval prior to the commencement of development. Given the sites prominent corner plot location, landscaping will help to enhance the appearance of the street scene and is appropriate.

No tree or landscape objections to this application subject to a pre-commencement condition relating to hard and soft landscaping and for this to then be carried out / maintained.

(Policies CS6 and CS38 of the Core Strategy (2008, 2015)).

Sustainability

The appropriate level of sustainable construction would be secured the appropriate building regulations requirements.

Notwithstanding the above, Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, supported by the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD also seeks that the proposal, as a 'creation of new residential units through conversion', should comply with BREEAM Level of 'Very Good'. A condition shall be attached to the planning permission to require a post construction BREEAM certificate to be submitted / approved demonstrating that this level has been met prior to first occupation.

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 then quashed the decision of the High Court.

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 (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 the conversion of the existing property, and, whilst it includes a rear extension to facilitate the proposals, given its scale and that it would utilise an existing rear addition to be demolished, this is not considered to be a significant extension to the property and therefore on the basis of the above amendment to Policy DM6 the proposal is not considered to require an affordable housing contribution.

CIL

The proposal is not liable for CIL - the existing building has been and is currently occupied as a residential dwelling and the extension is less than 100m².

Other Issues

In relation to planning conditions, in line with section 100ZA(5) of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended), which came into force on 01/10/18, discussions have been undertaken with the applicant regarding pre-commencement conditions. The applicant has formally agreed to the recommended pre-commencement conditions via return email on 08/05/2019.

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:

GRANT subject to conditions and informatives