

Design and access statement

Introduction

This design and access statement is written in support of the following proposal: -

First floor rear / side extension to facilitate 1no additional self-contained flat of use class C3 at 69 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, RG2 7PS.

This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents: -

- Existing plans and elevations
- Proposed plans, sections and elevations
- Transport assessment

Forward

This application is a follow up submission to a refused scheme ref: 190719. The application was refused on the following grounds:-

1. The proposed development would appear incongruous within its setting by reason of its scale and cramped relationship with the boundary with 67 Northumberland Avenue. The massing of the proposed development is considered an overdevelopment of the site that would be uncharacteristic and visually harmful to the outlook of residents north of the site and in Flat 2 of 69 Northumberland Avenue. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the LDF Core Strategy (2008).

Response

- A. The mass, scale and bulk of the proposal has been reduced. The majority of the extension is situated 3.7m away from the boundary of number 67. The previous distance was 2.0m. There is now significantly more breathing space. Flat 2 has been amended to be a studio unit with outlook onto Newcastle Road. The proposed development would no longer be visually harmful to the aforementioned flat unit.**

2. The proposed development, by virtue of its proximity to the boundaries with 67 Northumberland Avenue and the rear facing window for Flat 2, 69 Northumberland Avenue, would be overbearing and visually dominant on the residents of these properties. It would create additional noise and disturbance and competition for amenities on the site by being shared by 5 households and this would have a detrimental impact on the amenities of the existing occupants and the new occupiers. The proposal is therefore contrary to policy DM4 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012).

Response

- B. For the reasons pointed out in point A this reason to has been addressed. In relation to noise and disturbance, the intensification of the proposal is nil. Flat 2 was previously a 1B2P unit and is now a studio. Flat 5 is a studio. There is no further intensification and therefore no additional noise and disturbance.**

3. The proposed dwelling is not provided with acceptable off-road parking facilities with the proposed tandem layout being impractical. This would lead to parking on street in a location that is already heavily parked and on a bus route. The proposal is therefore likely to have an adverse effect on road safety and the flow of traffic, in conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS20 and Sites and Detailed Policies Document Policy DM12.

Response

- C. **The submitted transport statement makes clear that there is excellent availability of on-street car parking spaces within 200m to cater for the short-fall in parking provision. The surveys show a minimum of 28 vacant car parking spaces out of a capacity of 87 spaces available within 200m during the peak parking period. More so it states that there are no adverse transport impacts associated with the proposed development.**

4. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards provision of Affordable Housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough and the need to provide sustainable, inclusive mixed and balanced communities. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy DM6 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (altered 2015) and the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2013.

Response

- D. **The applicant is happy to complete a legal agreement and contribute towards affordable housing.**

Planning Policy

The proposal has been considered in line with planning policy at a national and local level.

NPPF (2018)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not form part of the development plan but is a material consideration. The new NPPF was published in July 2018 and replaces the previous 2012 Framework.

The revised NPPF maintains the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) which is defined in paragraph 8 as incorporating the same economic, social and environmental elements. The document recognises the overwhelming need to accommodate and accelerate housing development and make more effective use of land. Paragraph 60 states that in order to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, Local Planning Authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community. Paragraph 68 discusses the important contribution that small and medium sites can play and the speed in which they can deliver additional dwellings. Part C of the paragraph specifically encourages LPA's to *'support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions'*

The document introduces a new section (11) titled 'Making Effective Use of Land' which recognises that, due to the need to accelerate housing delivery, strategic policies must seek to make as much use as possible of previously developed land. Paragraph 118 specifically promotes the development of under used buildings. Paragraph 122 states that planning decisions should support the efficient use of land taking into account the needs for different types of housing, local market conditions, the capacity of local infrastructure and services, the desirability of maintaining an areas character or promoting its change and the importance of good design.

Paragraph 48 relates to the amount of weight given to emerging plans and broadly reflects the previous paragraph 216. The paragraph states that authorities can give appropriate weight to emerging plans (such as the New London Plan as subsequently discussed) taking into account the stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies, and the degree of consistency of emerging policies with the Framework. Given the significant overlap between the promotion of small sites and the need to make more efficient use of land and buildings, it is considered that increased weight can begin to be afforded to policy within the draft London Plan, which is based on a broad, up to date evidence base, has undergone consultation and is consistent with the strategic aims of the Framework.

Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard

This standard deals with internal space within new dwellings and is suitable for application across all tenures. It sets out requirements for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.

Reading Local Policy

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

- CS7 Design and the Public Realm
- CS14 Provision of Housing
- CS16 Affordable Housing

Sites and Detailed Policies Document – (Adopted October 2012, updated 2015)

- DM4 Safeguarding Amenity
- DM6 Affordable Housing – see appraisal for current status
- DM10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- DM11 Development of Private Residential Gardens
- DM13 Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD adopted October 2011
- Residential Conversions SPD (2013)
- Affordable Housing SPD adopted July 2013

Site Location and Description

The application site lies on the corner of Newcastle Road and Northumberland Avenue. Currently the existing building is in use as 4no self-contained flats. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of commercial and residential properties.

Use

The existing building provides residential use in the form of self-contained flats. The proposal provides 1 no additional self-contained flat. The principle of development would therefore be considered acceptable as it aligns with the current use. The proposal is further justified on the following grounds: -

- The proposal by way of providing residential accommodation, will positively contribute towards the boroughs housing stock.
- The proposal provides for a 1-bed unit which is considered as smaller and more affordable and in line with current market demand.
- The site is close to Reading Town Centre and employment areas.
- The site has good transport links and is close to local amenities.
- The site is close to parks and open space.

It is considered that the proposal is highly sustainable in line with the objectives of NPPF.

Amount

The importance of ensuring that all new residential development is of a high quality with good living conditions has been a paramount consideration in the planning of the new residential flat unit. It is noted that minimum floor area standards ensure an adequate amount of space is provided in residential development. In light of this, the proposed flat area and room size adhere to and go beyond the technical housing standards.

A 1B1P unit has a requirement of 37m² with shower, for its GIA. The proposed flat would exceed this standard and provide 38m² of floor space. It is acknowledged that the nationally described space standard sets a minimum ceiling height of 2.3 meters for at least 75% of the gross internal area of the dwelling so that new housing is of adequate quality, especially in terms of light, ventilation and sense of space. The new flat has an average height of 2.56m, therefore far exceeding this guidance.

In regard to amenity provision, the unit concerned is not a family dwelling. More so 3 of the existing 4 flats provide no amenity space. On balance the approach adopted to this application is considered acceptable.

Further to the above the scheme is able to support adequate provision of cycle parking which promotes sustainable transport methods and adequate refuse and recycling provision within convenient access of the street for collection. In regard to car parking, the proposal is situated in zone 2, primary core area and the required parking provision for the proposal is 1 space for the additional 1-bedroom unit. Please refer to the transport statement for additional details.

Layout and scale

The internal layout of the flat has been planned around the sites access arrangements. Internally all of the new rooms have been designed to ensure that adequate ventilation and sunlight and daylight reaches habitable rooms. The following additional design criteria has also governed the design: -

- The combined living space has a floor area of at least 28m² and is 3m wide.
- Any area with a headroom of less than 1.5m is not counted within the Gross Internal Area unless used solely for storage (if the area under the stairs is to be used for storage, assume a general floor area of 1m² within the Gross Internal Area). Any other area that is used solely for storage and has a headroom of 900-1500mm (such as under eaves) is counted at 50% of its floor area, and any area lower than 900mm is not counted at all.
- The minimum floor to ceiling height is 2.3m for at least 75% of the Gross Internal Area.
- The minimum width of hallways and other circulation spaces inside the home is 900mm.
- An accessible bathroom / shower room is to be provided.

In terms of scale please refer to the forward section which illustrates how the previous raised concerns have been overcome.

Appearance

The plans illustrate that the proposed materials would match the existing building. The roof form over the new extension is in keeping with the local area.

Access

In terms of inclusive design, the proposed residential unit will be compliant, where appropriate with Part M of the Building Regulations. The following has been considered through careful design considerations: -

- Enable ease of use of all entrances for the widest range of people.
- Enable convenient movement in hallways and through doorways.
- Enable convenient movement in rooms for as many people as possible.
- Enable people to have a reasonable line of sight from a seated position in the living room and to use at least one window for ventilation in each room.
- Locate regularly used service controls, or those needed in an emergency, so that they are usable by a wide range of household members - including those with restricted movement and limited reach.
- The provision of an accessible WC.

Sustainability

The proposal emphasises that development should make a contribution to minimising carbon dioxide emissions in accordance with guidance set in the London Plan. The relevant measures to be undertaken include: -

- High standards of insulation to reduce the amount of energy required to maintain comfortable temperature levels.
- The use of thermally massive materials, which represents the ability of materials to store heat or cool, is important as a means to control building temperatures and better manage day/night fluctuations.
- Efficient lighting and appliances will reduce energy consumption.
- Low temperature heating systems
- The use of an energy efficient water heating system.
- Ensuring water consumption does not exceed 105 litres per head per day.

Report by

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