



35 London
Road,
Reading
RG1 5BJ

Planning Statement

October 2019



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement supports an application that seeks a change of use from 5 Units for Housing Association to a 6Bed co-living multiple occupation property.
- 1.2 The proposal seeks to provide a major enhancement to a Grade 2 listed property in a state of disrepair that has been vacant for 2 years and deemed uninhabitable by a recent RICS surveyor report (August 2019).
- 1.3 This statement seeks to show that the proposal will not result in the unjustified aesthetic changes to the property's heritage. An accompanying heritage statement has been completed in relation and support of this application. The significant benefits the proposal will bring in terms of contributing to bringing property back to life and adding habitable rooms to the area to support the local economy, significantly outweigh the changes within this application.

2. Application Site and History

- 2.1 The property is a semi-detached Grade 2 listed property next to Kendrick Grammar school. The unit has been previously owned by a Housing Association (A2 Dominion) to house vulnerable young parents and children (Multiple Occupation). Our proposals are to enhance the property to replace WHBs in each bedroom with en-suite facilities in the form of a 6bedroom co-living HMO.
- 2.2 Planning permission was granted in 1981 (LPA Ref No. 81/TP/0241) from a single dwelling to 4 x 2person HMO (8 Occupants). Planning permission was again granted in 1983 (LPA Ref No. 83/TP/0060) conversion to 5 units for Housing Association to house vulnerable young parents and children.



Image 1 – Application Site

2.3 Dedicated car parking is provided off road for one car and permit holder parking on London Road.

2.4 There is one planning application of relevance to the site, which is the next door property, 33 London Road which has an HMO license in place for 6persons/households. As 35 London Road is larger, we believe this is sound support in approving our scheme which will be providing the same number of households/persons in the property and of a higher standard.

3. Proposed Development

3.1 The proposed development seeks to bring back to life a derelict property and enhance its function to current professional co-living standards. Please refer to the heritage statement with regards to the full detail changes to the building.

4. Policy Context

4.1. Reading Borough Council's key planning policy documents relevant to the proposed development includes the Core Strategy (2015); the Reading Central Area Action Plan. A New Local Plan is being considered for adoption at the meeting of full Council on the 4th November 2019 and is a material consideration. The pertinent policies from these documents are now set out

Core Strategy (2015)

4.2. Policy CS18 states that proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking, and the treatment of bin storage areas.

New Local Plan

4.3. Policy H8 states that proposals to convert buildings for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage and other related servicing.

4.4. Proposals to convert properties for multiple occupation will be acceptable where:

- The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of the doors, windows and other principal architectural features;
- The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;
- There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units

proposed and the proximity to other properties;

- There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;
- Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and
- The resulting properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.

5. Planning Assessment

- 5.1. The proposed development is for the conversion of a 5 unit Housing Association property to provide a 6 bed co-living multiple occupation property. The existing 5 units are not self-contained with wash hand basins only in each room and therefore the proposal would not result in a net loss of housing. The existing office previously used by the Housing Association will be converted to a sixth bedroom.
- 5.2. As outlined above, both adopted and emerging policy relating to conversions of properties into multiple occupation state that proposals will be assessed in terms of their impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area.
- 5.3. Only internal changes are proposed and as such the development would respect the physical character of the existing building. Furthermore, given the building is already within a residential use, there would not be any adverse impact in terms of noise and disturbance to neighbouring amenity.
- 5.4. Bin and cycle storage is provided in a suitable location and adequate space is provided for future residents.
- 5.5. On this basis the principle of development is considered to be acceptable in compliance with Policy CS18 and emerging Policy H8.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This proposal seeks to bring back into use a vacant building which has no realistic prospect of being used for its intended current purpose. The principle of development is supported by both adopted and emerging planning policy. The valuation report conducted by a RICS surveyor (August 2019) stated the property was uninhabitable. Our proposal will not only bring a Grade II listed property back to life but also contribute to the housing and rental demand in the local area. Moreso given its close links to the hospital, university and town centre will provide potential accommodation across the medical/educational/professional sectors that underpin the Reading borough local economy.
- 6.2. The site is accessible by a variety of transport modes, including sustainable travel options and provides sufficient parking to meet its own needs. The development raises no other adverse issues and for these reasons, we respectfully request the Council to approve the application.

Appendix 1 - Site Location



Figure 1: Application Site and Surroundings