

Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices,
Bridge Street,
Reading,
RG1 2LU

Friday 13th September 2019

PLANNING STATEMENT- CHANGE OF USE FROM C3 DWELLING HOUSE TO LARGE HOUSE IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (SUI GENERIS USE) AT 3 LACEWOOD GARDENS READING RG2 8JW

This Planning statement is submitted in good faith as an accurate and representative statement in support of this application. The proposal to which this statement relates is prepared by Studio RHL to support a Planning application to Reading Council, for the change of use from a C3 dwelling to a large HMO at the above address.

BACKGROUND: -

The application site is located to the South of Reading town centre just off the A327 Shinfield Road within the settlement boundary. The property benefits from a large rear garden with a large driveway providing 4 off road parking spaces for residents.

The dwelling is a two storey detached house in brick construction, with the first floor built in the roof space. The dwelling has a total of 6 bedrooms and a study arranged over the two floors, with the communal spaces on the ground floor. The property has a ground floor W.C, and two bathrooms on the first floor.

PLANNING HISTORY: -

Erection of four houses-approved on 18-08-1994

THE PROPOSAL: -

The applicant seeks to convert the existing dwelling house into a large HMO. **There will not be any structural or material changes to the external elevations of the dwelling.** Internally the current study in the ground floor will be enlarged to meet the minimum 6.5 sq.m standard area for a bedroom.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST NATIONAL POLICY AND GUIDANCE: -

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making

and decision- taking. For decision-taking this means: approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

Local Planning Policy

Core Strategy Policy CS18: Residential Conversions states

‘Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact of 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.’

The Residential Conversions SPD sets out the guidance for converting existing residential dwellings to Houses for Multiple Occupation and provides a checklist for the consideration of such conversions.

The application property is a large 6 bedroom residential dwelling, with a private rear garden and generous off road parking on a front driveway. The property having more than 4 bedrooms is considered to meet the requirements of Policy DM8, and is considered to be suitable for conversion to a 7 bedroom large house of multiple occupation, as set out in more detail below.

The Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD) sets out in Policy DM8 that any residential conversion must contribute to achieving an appropriately mixed and sustainable community by providing an acceptable housing mix, ensuring that, as appropriate, single family housing remains the dominant form of dwelling in the vicinity of the application and ensuring that there is not a detrimental impact on the physical character of the area. The application site is located outside of the town centre close to the junction of Shinfield Road and Whitley Wood Road, which acts as a local centre with an array of local shops. The surrounding area is predominantly residential with a mixture of family homes and smaller flats; these would still be dominant following the proposed conversion.

The proposal would introduce valuable and affordable smaller units of accommodation into the local area. Due to the existing variety in dwelling types the impact on the character of the surrounding area as a result of the proposed conversion would be minimal and is considered to be appropriate in this location. Family housing would still be common and given the presence of smaller flats nearby the use of the site as an HMO would not be uncharacteristic. There is also good access to the public transport network, with frequent bus links to Reading town centre available along the A327 Shinfield Road and good access to local shops including a Sainsbury’s Local and Tesco Express.

In addition, because there are no external works proposed there would be no visual impact on the character of the area. It is recognised that there would be an intensification of use on the site however this would not be significant and because the dwelling is detached it would not be detrimental to any neighbouring properties in terms of increased activity or noise.

Furthermore because the proposal is for the conversion and associated internal works only there would be no change in the relationship to neighbouring residential dwellings, resulting in no harmful impact on neighbour amenity, in respect of loss of light, overbearing or overlooking.

In terms of internal space the Residential Conversions checklist sets out that proposals will be assessed against Council’s minimum internal floor space standards. All the bedrooms in the dwelling would be for the occupation of one person and as such should be 6.5 square metres. Each of the bedrooms would exceed this minimum. This accords with Policy DM8.

The proposed layout would also maximise where possible the proximity of similar types of rooms as required by Policies DM4 and DM8. The communal areas are all located on the ground floor, meaning that only one of the bedrooms would share an adjoining wall with a communal area. The Client is proposing to add a layer of sound insulation plasterboard to reduce the transmission of noise and sound from the communal area.

Each room would also have an external window, providing an appropriate living environment. In addition, as mentioned the dwelling benefits from a generous rear garden, which is larger than the footprint of the dwelling, providing a suitable shared private outdoor space for future residents, in accordance with Policy DM10.

The site is located within parking zone 3, secondary core area. The property has an existing front driveway with space for 4 cars. This exceeds the 0.25 spaces per bedroom (2 spaces total) required by the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. Whitley Wood Road which the property fronts and Lacewood Gardens do not have any parking restrictions requiring parking permits. In addition to the car parking the property has an existing side shed, which is to be used for secure and covered cycle parking for future residents.

It is also relevant to note that the site is located within close proximity of bus stops along Shinfield Road, which provides the No.9 service every 10 minutes during weekday rush hours into the centre of Reading, and every 15 minutes during weekdays and Saturdays, and every half hour on Sundays. Consequently, the application site lies in a very sustainable location, and it is considered the available parking accommodation is ample for the proposed use.

The refuse area would be located just to the side of the main dwelling adjacent to the side fencing. This provides a discrete location whilst still making the bins accessible for both future residents and refuse collection.

CONCLUSION: -

The application dwelling is in a sustainable location close to local amenities with good public transport links. The dwelling is detached with 6 existing bedrooms and as such it is considered that the provision of two more bedrooms would be appropriate and would not lead to excessive intensification of use on the site and would not be harmful to neighbouring properties. In addition there are no external changes proposed, resulting in no impact to neighbour amenity or the appearance of the property.

The proposed bedrooms would all exceed the required floor space standards and there would be two communal rooms in addition to the shared kitchen available for use by future residents. The private communal rear garden also contributes to a pleasant living environment in accordance with the Council's standards.

In summary it is considered that the application dwelling is of a suitable size, location and quality to be appropriate for conversion to a larger house of multiple occupation (sui generis use). It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.

Yours faithfully,

Mr Butt
On behalf of Studio RHL
BSc Hons Architecture, Dip. Architecture