

***Change of use of existing dwelling user
class C3a
to Home in Multiple Occupation user
class C4***

***at 21 Highgrove Street,
Reading RG2 0EH***

For Mr M Gill

Design & Access Statement

R A M M U R T I D E S I G N L T D

*ARCHITECTURAL & PLANNING SERVICES
268 TILEHURST ROAD, READING RG3 0NE
TEL/FAX: 0118 9510628 MOB: 07799 883574*

Introduction, Site Location, and Description

This design & access statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the change of use of an existing property which was a single family dwelling user class C3a and is proposed to being used as a Home in Multiple Occupation user class C4 for a small HMO with up to 5No rooms being let out to professionals or students attending Reading University.

The application is a retrospective application as the building is in use for multiple occupancy and planning permission is only required for such a change of use due to the Article 4 Directive in the University area of Reading.

There are no plans to extend or alter the footprint of the property, and the floor plans are presented as per the existing arrangement. This is on the basis that the single storey rear extension and the loft conversion have been completed prior to the submission of this application and that no further works are sought.

It should be noted that the previous extensions relate to works that are within the realms of Permitted Development where up to 3.0m can be extended as single storey extensions, and loft conversions where they do not increase the volume of the roof by more than 40 cubic metres for a terraced dwelling.

The use of the rooms is as follows:

Ground floor has a room to the front used as a bedroom, a hallway leading to a middle room which is also used as a bedroom and then to the rear room where living, dining and kitchen facilities are provided.

The first floor has a landing with two rooms both of which are used as bedrooms, one of which has an ensuite, and then an independent stair access to the loft, which has a single room within the roof void used as the 5th bedroom with a small ensuite shower room.

Access is available to all occupiers to the rear garden of the property.

The property meets the requirements for room sizes and amount of living and washrooms for the level of accommodation being undertaken as there are sufficient washroom and kitchen facilities to enable compliance with the council's HMO departments requirements for the minimum number of each facility.

The property will be required to be licensed with the council's HMO department upon this application being accepted.

Access

The property lies to the northern section of Highgrove Street, as it bends to the right heading south, within walking distance to Whitley Street which is a major local Centre identified within the Reading Borough Council adopted Core Strategy.

The house is therefore very close to the shops; restaurants; hot food takeaways; chemists and the post office on the Whitley Street, and a short walk to the main Reading Town Centre and to the University Campus.

Parkland is similarly a short walk away, via Elizabeth walk, and a little further to Cintra Park.

There is a very good bus service with routes 5 and 6 to the town centre and to the nearby shopping centre off Basingstoke Road to the South. The routes are operated by Reading Transport with journeys to the Reading Town Centre and the railway station.

Highgrove Street is not as extensively populated street, and is one-way street accessed from Christchurch Road from the south leading to Whitley Street at its northern end. This allows for limited traffic movements providing a quiet setting without a continuous flow of traffic as per the other streets, and in respect of density, closeness of plots.

There is no off-street parking available and the on street has a Permit Parking control with some 2hour slots for short term parking which then reverts to residents only permits.

The properties have limited hard standings to their front gardens so cannot provide off street parking.

To encourage fewer vehicle movements, cycling is intended to be encouraged wherever possible. There is space to accommodate bins and a two cycles to the front of the property.

Hard and Soft Landscaping

The existing boundaries to the rear garden are predominantly 1800mm high close boarded fences which achieve a coherent appearance and achieve a good sense of enclosure. The garden has a combination of hard surfaces and lawn allowing good amenity for the property and its occupiers.

The front is hard landscaped providing space for bins and cycles in an open arrangement.

Unit Calculations

Reading Borough Council use the rule of a maximum of 25% of properties being allowed to be HMO's within a 50.0m radius of the application dwelling.

The Block plan shows that 73No properties including the application dwelling come within the 50.0m radius, therefore allowing a total of 18 that should be accepted as HMO's if they are not already.

The HMO register for 2019 available from the council's website currently has only 1No registered properties both that lie within the 50.0m radius or for that matter on Highgrove Street itself.

Surrounding Streets are Highgrove terrace, Mount Pleasant and Whitley Street, that come within the 50.0m radius of the front door of the application dwelling. It is understood that the council has other checks that would need to be carried out to include properties that are not necessarily registered but are otherwise used as HMO's already. A door to door site survey was undertaken on 10th November 2019, which established that one additional un-registered dwelling was also in HMO use. It is anticipated that there are 2No in total that are additional and non-registered dwellings which could be included, thereby 3No in total and that the percentage would remain below the 25% threshold if the application dwelling is allowed.

Appearance and Scale

The existing building is not being extended further and will be retained without affecting the external appearance and will therefore not compromise the streetscene or the terrace run of properties in Essex Street.

Areas and Accommodation schedule

The application site has a site area of 101.86m², comprising a plot approximately 4m across and 26m deep
Gross internal areas are as follows:

- Ground floor 50.65m²
- First Floor 35.42m²
- Loft Floor 13.70m² (at 1.5m floor height and above)

Total floor area 99.77m²

Ground floor accommodation

- Reception room used as bedroom (9.8m²)
- Middle bedroom (8.45m²)
- Communal living area
- Communal kitchen
- Shower room

First floor accommodation

- 2No bedrooms off landing area
- Bed 3 (9.6m²), bed 4 (12.1m²),

Loft Level Accommodation

- bed 5 (13.7m²)

Policy DM:8 ~ Reading Borough Councils

SITES AND DETAILED POLICIES DOCUMENT ADOPTED - OCTOBER 2012 (Revised January 2015)

Policy DM:8 for Residential conversions states:

Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation under Core Strategy Policy CS18 will only be acceptable where:

- ☐ The proposal respects the physical character of the area and additionally 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 other residential properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;
- ☐ There is appropriate sound insulation between proposed and neighboring units and layouts avoid 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.
- Individual units provide appropriate minimum internal floor standards and headroom in accordance with the Council's adopted minimum internal floor space standards

The use is consistent with policy DM:8 as the rooms are comfortably proportioned, and there is no contrived arrangement being made use of to achieve any of the requirements. Rooms are not being reallocated as part of the use of the building other than to convert 2 of the the ground floor reception rooms to bedrooms, which lies directly below a bedroom at first floor.

The building form is not compromised, and the character remains unchanged.

Bins and cycle storage is to be provided at the front garden hardstanding of the property.

The proposal to have the property accepted as a Home in Multiple Occupation meets the requirements for a 5 bedroom facility that provides a service to the local area where accommodation is available for students or professionals, and which is in close proximity to the Major Local Centre of Reading.