

PLANNING STATEMENT

Change of use of residential property (C3) to a 7-bed HMO (Sui Generis)

17 Lorne Street, Reading. RG1 7WY

On Behalf of: Hamlet Homes

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for the change of use of a 5-bed residential property (Use Class C3) to a 7-bed House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Sui Generis).
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following documents prepared by Space Office:
- 1:1250 Site Location Plan
 - 1:100 Existing floor plans and elevations
 - 1:100 Proposed floor plans and elevations
- 1.4 The relevant application fee of £462 will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The application site comprises a 2.5 story 5-bed terraced residential property on the eastern side of Lorne Street, within the settlement boundary of Reading. The site is located outside of a defined Conservation Area and a District/Local Centre. The site does however form part of an Air Quality Management Area, along with the majority of central Reading and main arterial routes leading out from the town centre.

- 2.2 The property effectively comprises one of a pair of identical terraced properties along with the adjacent No. 19. The wider streetscene, particularly on the eastern side of Lorne Street, comprises almost exclusively terraced properties yet which vary largely in character, architectural vernacular and scale.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 None of relevance.

4. Policy Assessment

National Guidance

- 4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is relevant to the consideration of the application. Some weight also needs to be given to the content of the Ministerial Statement, 'Planning for Growth', issued in March 2011.
- 4.2 The 'Golden Thread' running through the centre of guidance within the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that "*Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible*". Paragraph 8 of the NPPF comments that planning should "make effective use of land" and ensure that "*a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations*". Paragraph 68 states that "*small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area.*"

Principle of Development

- 4.3 The application site is located within the settlement boundary of Reading with the property in question already in residential use. The principle of development, namely the change of use to a 7-bed HMO, is therefore considered to be acceptable provided such a change of use is in accordance

with local policies CS18 and DM8 and the Council's Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

- 4.4 Policy CS18 states that proposals to convert existing residential properties into HMO's 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.
- 4.5 Policy DM8 adds further amplification to CS18 by stating that such proposals should, amongst other things: respect the physical character of the area and not result in a significant loss of single-family housing; not unduly impact the amenities of neighbouring properties with regards to noise and disturbance; ensure bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed. Furthermore, the property should consist of 4 or more bedrooms (or measures more than 120sqm gross external floorspace) with an appropriate balance being struck between communal and provide amenity areas. The property in question consists of 5 bedrooms and exceeds a gross external floorspace of 120sqm.
- 4.6 The Council's SPD advises that planning permission will not normally be granted where the proportion of HMOs (either C4 or Sui Generis) would result in HMOs representing 25% or more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site. The Council's HMO register indicates that out of 27 properties within a 50m radius of the site, only 3 have been licensed as HMOs; a proportion of 11%. The change of use of No. 17 Lorne Street would result in 14% of the properties within 50m of the site (including the property itself) comprising HMOs.
- 4.7 It is therefore not considered that the loss of a single 5-bed dwelling within the centre of Reading would materially dilute or harm the balance of housing within the centre of Reading, and the proposals are therefore considered to be acceptable in this respect.
- 4.8 Notwithstanding the above however, it should be noted that a change of use of the property to a *6-bed* HMO, either by way of constituting subsection

c) of Use Class C3 or Use Class C4, would not constitute a material change of use in the first instance or would comprise change of use benefitting from permitted development rights as outlined within the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) in the second instance.

- 4.9 Utilising such a change of use as a viable fall-back position, it is not considered that the change of use to a 7-bed HMO as proposed within the application would result in a materially greater impact in planning terms than that which could be achieved as outlined in paragraph 4.8 above.

Density and Size of Dwellings

- 4.10 The proposals would result in the creation of a 7-bed HMO, thus providing an alternative means of affordable housing for local residents within the centre of Reading. All bedrooms would be complete with an en-suite bathroom, with residents sharing a communal kitchen/dining area on the ground floor.

Character and Appearance of the Area

- 4.11 The proposals would not involve any external changes to the existing property, thereby preserving the character of the wider streetscene in its current form.

Residential Amenity

- 4.12 The proposals would not give rise to a material impact upon neighbouring amenity by way of noise and disturbance along what is already a densely populated residential street. Future residents would benefit from a communal garden to the rear which provides ample space for outdoor recreation and the hanging/drying of clothes etc.

Transport and Parking

- 4.13 The Council's adopted parking standards indicate that a total of 1.75 off-street parking spaces would need to be provided in order to serve the 7-bed HMO.
- 4.14 It should be recognised that the existing property does not benefit from any off-street parking. Furthermore, Paragraph 106 of the NPPF states that:

*Maximum parking standards for residential and non-residential development **should only be set** where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network, or for optimising the density of development in city and town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. In town centres, local authorities should seek to improve the quality of parking so that it is convenient, safe and secure, alongside measures to promote accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists.*

- 4.15 It should be highlighted that the site is located in a highly sustainable location, being situated only a 10-minute walk (0.5 miles) from Reading town centre. Furthermore, various bus stops are located within a short walk of the site along Oxford Road providing regular services to Tilehurst, Purley on Thames, Reading town centre and the University of Reading's Whiteknights campus. Moreover, Reading West train station is situated only a short walk to the west providing regular services to Reading, Newbury, Basingstoke and London Paddington. It is therefore anticipated that future residents of the property would make good use of local transport links and the proximity of the site to Reading town centre.
- 4.16 Noting the highly sustainable nature of the site, Para. 106 of the revised NPPF and the viable fall-back position of property being converted to a 6-bed HMO without the need for planning permission; it is not considered that a 'technical deficiency' of off-street parking should preclude the granting of planning permission in this instance.

4.17 *Cycle provision*

- 4.18 Adequate space for cycle storage would be provided within the basement, as per the existing situation.

Refuse Provision

- 4.19 Refuse would be stored within the existing basement storage area and to the immediate rear of the property as per the existing situation.

Sustainability/Energy

- 4.20 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF supports the transition of development to a low carbon future. The national Code for Sustainable Homes has now been abolished, however it is proposed that the development would conform to Part L of the Building Regulations which as of 2010 requires a 25% reduction in carbon emissions over the 2006 standards. This is equivalent to Code level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. By way of contributing to the reduction in carbon, the proposal would also achieve current building construction standards with added sustainability measures through;

- a) The limitation of the amount of inherent material, structure and embodied energy through the employment of good building standards to create an excellent SAP rating;
- b) Use of locally sourced, recycled materials and labour where practicable
- c) Maximizing the use of natural light through floor-ceiling windows
- d) Reduced internal water consumption of 110 litres per person per day through the incorporation of water efficient sanitary fittings, including low flow toilets and water efficient taps for wash basins.
- e) Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service
- f) Secure cycle provision to encourage sustainable modes of transport
- g) 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings
- h) 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision
- i) Water butts fitted to the rainwater down pipes for watering the garden
- j) Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable

The proposal is therefore considered to comply with sustainability objectives in this respect.

Affordable Housing

- 4.21 Given the nature of the proposals, such development would not be liable to affordable housing provision; either on site or by way of a commuted sum.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 4.22 The proposals involve a change of use to a 7-bed HMO. It is understood that such development would not be liable for CIL.

Air Quality

- 4.23 An air quality report has been submitted with the application and confirms there are no adverse effects of the development on air quality, arising from the proposal.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.
- 5.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 4 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would provide an alternative form of affordable housing for the local residents of Reading, without adverse effect on the character of the area, the amenity of neighbouring residents or the safety and convenience of the local highway network.
- 5.3 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.