

Completed 'Checklist' for consideration of residential conversions applications relating to 21 Highgrove Street, Reading, Berkshire

Checklist No:	Description of criteria:	Our Assessment:
Checklist 1	(CS18, DM8): Any external alterations must be carried out sympathetically, respecting the physical character of the area.	The property has been extended at the rear and a new dormer added to the loft. The additions are within the realms of works that are accepted under the "Permitted Development" rules. The additions to the property have been in place and were completed prior to the submission of this application. This criteria of the checklist is therefore met.
Checklist 2	(DM4, DM9, DM10): Extensions must achieve acceptable residential amenity for existing and new occupiers plus respect the character of the existing house and area ensuring outside amenity space is not unacceptably reduced.	DM9 relates to house extensions and ancillary accommodation and is not relevant to this application as the additions to the property have been in place and were completed prior to the submission of this application. Policies DM4 and DM10 are met on the basis that the floor plans set out acceptable levels of residential amenity for occupiers. It is also considered that the amenity of existing neighbouring occupiers is respected by the proposals.
Checklist 3	(DM8): 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 there is not a detrimental impact on the physical character of the area.	The existing use of the property is a C3 use. In line with the Residential Conversion SPD an assessment has been conducted on the surrounding properties to ensure that the mix of the housing in the areas, remains as far as possible. From the information available at the time of the assessment it was found that there are potentially only 2No other HMOs within a 50m radius of the application site. Only one of these are actually registered with the Councils HMO register, and no others have formal planning permission or an application in place for lawfulness to use as HMO's. The Article 4 direction is to ensure that HMOs don't dominate an area or lead to significant change to the character of an area. Given Potentially only 3No out of the 73No that come within the 50m radius are are found to be HMO's and that the 25% figure is not compromised, this application cannot be judged to alter the character of the area.

Checklist 4	(DM10): An appropriate level of private outdoor space will be expected.	The property at 21 Highgrove Street benefits from a typical size of plot for the area, and has a larger than average for the street amount of garden space at the rear. Policy DM10 seeks to provide an appropriate balance between parking and amenity space. The plot layout means that parking is not able to be provided off street, and therefore does not impact or is required to encroach on the garden space. The front gardens in all cases in the street are used to store bins and therefore do not offer amenity to the houses so is no worse if allocated for use as storage space for bins or cycles as shown on the plans.
Checklist 5	(DM4, DM8): Issues such as those below need to be taken into account in any residential conversions application: • privacy and overlooking, • access to sunlight and daylight, • visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development, • noise and disturbance, • crime and safety.	• Privacy and Overlooking: The proposal does not seek any further external changes and the existing internal arrangements of the property essentially now remain unchanged in terms of layout. As a result, there would be no change to any existing levels of overlooking which could potentially occur and existing levels of privacy would therefore be retained. The internal arrangements will also ensure that suitable privacy levels are achieved for future occupiers, with each bedroom and bathroom facility being separately accessed via shared hallways. • Access to sunlight and daylight: The proposals make acceptable provisions for access to sunlight and daylight, with all rooms in the property having the benefit of receiving natural light via existing windows. • Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development: The appearance of the property will remain unaffected by the proposals on the basis that no further external changes are sought. The nature of the building, which has only undergone very limited extensions since its history and is to remain in its current form is not considered 'overbearing'. • Noise and Disturbance: Given the size of the property and number of existing bedrooms in the current C3 use it is considered that there will only be a minimum increase in activity. The property is a terraced plot, and has impact on two neighbours that adjoin it to the left and to the right.

		No changes are proposed that would impact these two owners any more than that as it exists. • Crime and safety: The proposal is for the provision of a 5 bedroom HMO. Each bedroom would be lockable, in addition to the main access doors of the property. It is considered that these provisions are suitable to protect future occupiers against crime and to ensure a safe living environment.
Checklist 6	(DM8): The property to be converted to a flat or large HMO should have four or more bedrooms or measure more than 120 square metres gross. When calculating the floor area of the property the measurement should be based on the external dimensions as at 1st July 1948 or when built (whichever is the later).	The proposal is for a small HMO of 5 bedrooms. If used as a single-family house, it could be reasonably concluded to be a 2/3 bedroom property DM8 therefore is not relevant to this application property.
Checklist 7	The Local Planning Authority will consider applications for house conversions including both HMOs and flats against the Council's adopted minimum internal floorspace standards as set out at Appendix 1.	It is considered that each of the proposed bedrooms are of an acceptable size. The internal space standards contained in Appendix 1 set out that; a. the floor area for a shared kitchen shall not be less than 7 sq. metres and not more than two floors distant from any user; b. where cooking facilities are provided in a separate room each bedroom must be a minimum of: I. 6.5 sq. metres if occupied by one person, II. 10.5 sq. metres if occupied by two persons. It is considered that each of the proposed bedrooms and shared kitchen are of an acceptable size. The bedrooms will be occupied by one person or where double rooms potentially by a couple and all exceed the necessary standards.
Checklist 8	(DM4, DM8): It will be necessary to ensure appropriate sound insulation between proposed and neighbouring units before a converted property is occupied.	The existing property already has suitable sound insulation in place to ensure acceptable levels of amenity for neighbouring units.

Checklist 9	(DM4, DM8): Proposed layouts should avoid locating living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens next to, above, or below proposed and neighbouring bedrooms. Instead, the 'stacking' of rooms of a similar type is preferable.	Communal lounge, kitchen, one bedrooms and w.c. facilities are provided on the ground floor. The configuration of the house means it is necessary for bedrooms to be provided next to bathrooms to ensure there is enough bathrooms to serve all the occupiers. The house is large enough that the effects of living rooms, bathrooms and kitchen next to, above, or below each other is likely not going to have any impact on occupiers. The proposed layout has been carefully considered to provide the most appropriate solution for the property .
Checklist 10	(DM4, DM8): Habitable rooms, such as living rooms and bedrooms, should benefit from an external window. The provision of natural light and ventilation is a legal requirement under Environmental Health legislation.	As previously highlighted, every room within the property benefits from an external window.
Checklist 11	(DM4, DM8): Proposals for self-contained units, solely within a basement, will normally be permitted where this unit would benefit from dual aspect*, an acceptable outlook** and sufficient headroom***.	This proposal does not relate to the provision of self-contained flats. Additionally, the property does not benefit from a basement.
Checklist 12	(DM8): Proposals which seek to convert attic/loft space will normally be permitted where the attic/loft space would benefit from sufficient headroom and is incorporated into a self-contained unit which is split over two floors of accommodation.	Policy DM8 appears to only consider headroom in the case of self-contained flats and not HMOs. In the case of this property the loft has been converted and a new dormer is present that therefore only has a minimal impact on headroom as in the main the accommodation to the bedroom in the loft is within the raised dormer area of the loft.
Checklist 13	(CS18, CS24): Parking standards for all residential conversions should be in accordance with the Council's adopted 'Revised Parking Standards and Design' (2011) SPD.	The Council's Parking Standards SPD requires HMOs to provide parking at a level of 0.25 spaces per bedroom. This would result in a requirement for the site of 1.25 spaces. As there is no opportunity to provide off street parking by the sheer nature of the setting of the application setting, the applicants would be agreeable to accept that no new parking permits than those already available to the property would be sought if required to be set as a condition of any approval that might be forthcoming. (as per Checklist 14)

Checklist 14	HMOs located within a street where a residents' parking permit scheme operates will not be entitled to on-street car parking permits. The same restrictions may apply to new flats in such streets, see the 'Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD.	The applicants would be agreeable to accept that no new parking permits than those already available to the property would be sought if required to be set as a condition of any approval that might be forthcoming
Checklist 15	(CS7, CS18, DM8, DM9): Removal of boundary treatment to accommodate parking or access to parking will not be permitted where it makes a valuable contribution to the character of the area.	Parking is not sought as part of this application.
Checklist 16	(CS24, DM4, DM8): The provision of outdoor cycle storage should have a secure, covered and convenient location. The storage area should be lockable with provision to secure bicycles within it.	Provision will be made for secure outdoor cycle storage in the area of hardstanding to the front of the site.
Checklist 17	(CS18, DM8): Sufficient and suitable refuse containers should be provided within the curtilage of the application building which are easily accessible for all occupants of the house and the refuse collectors and ensuring they are sympathetically located with regard to their visual impact.	Sufficient and suitable refuse containers will be provided for residents. The bins can be stored to the front hardstanding of the property.
Checklist 18	(CS5): Where possible, a level access from the public highway to the building's principal entrance should be provided or retained.	The proposal does not seek to alter this existing arrangement, which is considered acceptable.
Checklist 19	(CS9, CS16, CS20, CS29, DM3, DM6): Developers should compensate for loss or damage created by a development and mitigate any impact caused. A planning obligation to secure a financial or other contribution towards physical or social infrastructure improvements may be sought.	It is not considered that the application should warrant the requirement for any planning obligations. Should the Council consider this not to be the case then details relating to those required should be set out.

Checklist 20	The Council can serve an Enforcement Notice where conversion works have been carried out without planning permission. This action can result in the unauthorised works being removed (or the unauthorised use discontinued) and the building/ use being reinstated. Non-compliance with the provisions of an enforcement notice constitutes a criminal offence.	This applicant is aware that the Council can serve an Enforcement Notice where conversion works have been carried out or a use is operating without planning permission and would seek to rectify and re-instate if necessary.
Checklist 21	Early discussions with a Building Control Officer will improve the internal layout of the scheme and may avoid the need for external fire-escapes (which may require planning Permission in their own right).	The internal layout of the scheme has been well thought out by the applicant who has experience in HMO properties. Building Regulations approval was sought and is in place for the extensions and loft conversion.
Checklist 22	The HMO team should be contacted about Environmental Health matters.	The applicants have liaised and submitted an application for an HMO licence.
Checklist 23	(DM8): At least one unit of accommodation created should be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two Bedrooms.	Having read Policy DM8, this checklist item is not relevant to proposals for HMOs and only relates to self-contained flats.
Checklist 24	Where a proposal incorporates a family sized unit, that unit should have direct access to a useable area of private, rather than communal, garden space.	Again, this element of the checklist appears to relate to self-contained flats. None of the HMO bedrooms proposed are intended to be used as family sized units and therefore no private amenity spaces are required.
Checklist 25	(DM8): A standard of one communal room for every 4-6 bedrooms (depending on the size of the bedroom) will be provided, which will have acceptable amenity standards and appropriate access for all residents.	Each of the residents will have access to a lounge, kitchen and bathrooms. Policy DM8 requirements are therefore met with the proposals.
Checklist 26	(DM8): A proper agreement may be required to ensure acceptable management of all communal parts of the HMO.	The applicant is a registered landlord with a number of properties in his portfolio and has a management arrangement in place for all aspects of the building including communal areas.