



Planning Statement

106 Wantage Road

Reading

RG30 2SF

1. Introduction

1.1. This Statement has been prepared to support the following proposal:

Change of use from purposes falling within class C4 (house in multiple occupation) to a 7 bedroom house in multiple occupation (sui generis).

1.2. The Town Planning Experts act as planning consultants for the appellant.

2.0. Site Context

- 2.1. 106 Wantage Road is a semi-detached property in a line of similar residential properties.
- 2.2. The property is set back from the road behind a small yard.
- 2.3. The building is a 2-storey property with additional accommodation in the roof. The property is brick under a slate roof. The property appears to date from the end of the 19th century.
- 2.4. No 106 already enjoys use as a House in Multiple Occupation for 6 persons.
- 2.5. Wantage Road and the adjoining streets are residential in character, consisting principally of semi-detached and terraced properties.
- 2.6. The property lies approximately 2.4 km (1.5 miles) west of Reading town centre.

3.0. Planning History

- 3.1. 051058 - Single storey, flat roofed rear domestic extension
Permission 2005

4. Policy Framework

National Policy

- 4.1. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) became the primary national planning policy guidance on 24 July 2018.

Sustainable Development

- 4.2. Paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF set out the Governments overriding objectives of securing sustainable development. Para 8 of the NPPF identifies the roles of the planning system in achieving sustainable development:

7. There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- *an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;*

- *a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the*

community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

- *an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.*

- 4.3. Para 11 goes on to provide further emphasis on the focus towards sustainable development stating:

Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed ; or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Local Policy

4.4. The Core Strategy comprises the main planning document for Reading. The Core Strategy was adopted by the Borough Council on 27 January 2015.

4.5. It sets out the overall planning strategy and important principles for development in Reading

4.6. Policy CS18 relates to residential conversions and states:

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.

4.7. A Supplementary Planning Document on Residential Conversions was adopted by the Council in November 2013. This sets out various criteria by which schemes will be assessed.

5.0. Planning Considerations

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| <p>5.1. 106 Wantage Road dates from around the end of the 19th century and consists of a 2-storey dwelling, with a room in the roof.</p> <p>5.2. It currently enjoys use as a small House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4).</p> <p>5.3. The proposal seeks a change of use to form a 7-room house in multiple occupation. There is therefore no increase in the number of HMO's in the area.</p> <p>5.4. At present the accommodation consists of 2 bedrooms on the ground floor, together with a communal sitting room, kitchen, shower/ w.c. and garden room. There are 3 bedrooms on the first floor with a communal bathroom, and a further bedroom on the top floor.</p> <p>5.5. The proposal is to increase this to 7 bedrooms by converting the current garden room on the ground floor to an additional bedroom.</p> <p>5.6. No external alterations are proposed.</p> <p>5.7. Access would be via the existing front door via the kitchen with separate access to the rear garden or via the communal kitchen.</p> | <p>5.8. The present door to the front would be replaced with a window and the windows between the kitchen and garden room would be blocked up.</p> <p>5.9. An SPD on Residential Conversions was adopted in November 2013. This provides a checklist which is attached as Appendix A.</p> <p>5.10. In the appellant's opinion, the proposal meets the Council's requirements.</p> <p>5.11. In particular the property enjoys a large rear garden so adequate outside amenity space exists and is unaltered by this proposal. (Checklist 2)</p> <p>5.12. Given the existing use of the property as an HMO and the minimal increase in numbers of residents proposed, no impact on the amenity of neighbours is anticipated. (Checklist 3 and 5)</p> <p>5.13. In 2008 the Government produced a report "Evidence Gathering – Housing in Multiple Occupation and possible planning responses". This identified a number of measures as evidenced by good practice around the country, by which local authorities can control anti-social behaviour associated with HMO's through non-planning mechanisms.</p> <p>5.14. In 2010 a report was commissioned by the Department of Communities and Local Government entitled 'Evaluation of the Impact of HMO Licensing and Selective Licensing'. This was produced by the Building Research Establishment in 2010.</p> |
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5.15. Paragraph 4.4 is particularly pertinent:

4.4 Summary of the private rented sector in the twelve case studies

The Rugg¹ review provides a comprehensive analysis of the modern private rented sector. This study, however, looks closely at the HMO market which has a defined role within this sector and the privately rented properties affected by selective licensing. Interviews with the case studies reveal that LAs vary in their understanding of the dynamics of the local housing market and the role of the private rented sector in these markets. Consequently, there are distinct differences in how they see private sector initiatives (including licensing) linking into their broader strategic roles. For some case studies, raising standards in the sector is a must for regeneration strategies. For other LAs, the private rented market has

been

left to its own devices. The following provides a summary of the issues raised by the case studies:

- *the case studies underline the growing diversity and complexity of the private rented sector generally as 'new' tenants and landlords enter it.*

There has been an expansion at the 'top' end of the market to meet the needs of young professionals. Here, standards tend to be good, often managed by larger portfolio landlords.

- *large portfolio landlords were considered more knowledgeable and more experienced landlords, treating the profession as a business.*

5.16. Table 1 of that report identifies that there is a perception of the behaviour of HMO tenants however Table 11 identifies that this is not the principal problem with this form of accommodation and as such the perception of harm is much worse than the reality of the situation.

¹ The Private Rented Sector: Its Contribution and Potential. Julie Rugg and David Rhodes

Centre for Housing Policy. University of York 2008

5.17. It is a long-standing tenet of planning that decisions should be based on evidence and not upon anecdotal or personal opinions. The above indicates that such evidence as exists show that HMO's create no greater nuisance than any other form of property.

5.18. Although the property enjoys no on-site parking, on-street parking is available in the neighbouring streets. Evidence shows however that occupiers of HMOs have lower car ownership rates than other forms of households, a fact acknowledged by the government in allowing change of use from a single dwelling to a small HMO (up to 6 persons) without any increase in parking required.

5.19 The property is within a relatively sustainable location being within easy walking distance of the local shops and services in Reading town centre.

5.20. It is also close to main bus routes providing a regular service into and out of the town centre. Reading West railway station also lies to the east of the property.

5.21. Provision can be made for secure and dry cycle storage to the rear of the property.

6.0. Conclusion

6.1. In the context of local guidelines and policies and having regard to the character of the area it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.

Rear view of 106 Wantage Road



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