

PLANNING STATEMENT

Change of use of existing 7 bedroom HMO (Sui Generis) to 9 bedroom HMO (Sui Generis) to include proposed two storey rear extension and front and rear dormer windows. Demolition of existing single storey rear extension and existing front dormer.

189 SOUTHAMPTON STREET, READING, RG1 2RB

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the proposed change of use and extension of an existing 7 bedroom Sui Generis House in Multiple Occupation. The number of bedrooms will increase to 9 bedrooms as a result of the proposal.
- 1.2 This statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will summarise the relevant planning policies and assess the proposal in light of these policies. The conclusion reached is that the Development Plan supports 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 plans by 3DR Architects:
- Site Location Plan DPA 104-01 P1
 - Existing Site and Floor Plans DPA 104-03-P2
 - Existing Elevations and Section DPA 104-04-P2
 - Existing side elevation and section DPA 104-09 P1
 - Proposed Site and Floor Plans DPA 104-07-P4
 - Proposed Elevations and Section DPA 104-08-P2
 - Proposed side elevation and section DPA 104-11 P1
 - Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment by Ian Keen Ltd
- 1.4 Payment of £385 which forms the relevant planning application fee will be sent to the Council under separate cover.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

- 2.1 The application site is located on the eastern side of Southampton Street, within the defined settlement. The property itself is an existing 2½ storey end terrace residential building of traditional design, with red facing brick construction and a pitched slate tiled roof with small front and rear dormer windows facilitating existing accommodation in the roof space.
- 2.2 The property currently has 7 bedrooms located across all floors, with the communal rooms to the rear of the ground floor. The property also has a private rear garden with neighbours to either side and to the rear. The property does not have any on-plot parking.
- 2.3 Application 141549 determined on the 12th December 2014, established the lawfulness of the current HMO use for 7 bedrooms.
- 2.4 Application 151670 approved a single storey rear extension and replacement dormer windows at the property. This permission remains extant and can be implemented. The approved elements form part of the current proposals, and so the only addition for consideration is the first floor rear extension.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The proposed development is for the change of use of number 189 Southampton Street to accommodate an additional 2 bedrooms, facilitated through a rear first floor extension. The proposed ground floor rear extension will provide a larger communal kitchen and dining area for the residents whilst the larger and additional dormer windows will improve the loft bedroom accommodation and facilitate the introduction of en-suite bathrooms.
- 3.2 By way of background information, the proposed HMO at 189 Southampton Street is intended to serve individual professionals working in the local area only, and will not be let to students or DSS tenants, (tenants in receipt of housing benefit). In addition, the quality of the living accommodation will be of a very high spec, designed to attract higher earning professionals who will take pride in their living space, keep it in an orderly fashion, and be respectful of their neighbours. The applicants are existing, responsible HMO Landlords of properties within Wokingham and Reading Borough. They have an established relationship with relevant Licensing Officers at the Councils, and excellent relationships with the neighbouring properties to their existing sites, who have had no concerns with the professional people living in the property.

4. ASSESSMENT AGAINST PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 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

- 4.2 The Core Strategy and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document form the development plan for Reading Borough Council.

Principle of Development

- 4.3 The application site is located within the settlement boundary as defined by Core Strategy policy CS6, where development is appropriate.

Character of the Area

- 4.4 The local area is characterised by a mix of property sizes and scales, and lies outside of the Article 4 restrictive area. The proposed two storey extension to the rear is considered to preserve the character of the surrounding area and would not be detrimental to the street scene character. The proposed materials would match the existing building.
- 4.5 The property already benefits from a front and rear dormer window. Other properties within the street also benefit from such windows, as can be seen in the images below:



Southampton Street elevation including numbers 189 and 191 (left image) and number 187 (right image)



Rear of number 189 and existing terrace

- 4.6 The proposed two dormer windows to the front elevation are considered to enhance the property appearance by being positioned in line with the existing ground and first floor windows, and being modest in scale would not appear bulky or top heavy. The proposed two dormer windows to the rear would also be in line with existing fenestration arrangements, and the sloped roof design minimises the bulk and mass of the upper storey of development. Consequently, the proposal is considered to have an acceptable effect on the character of the locality. The proposal materials would match the host building, and could be controlled as such by planning condition. This aspect of the development has been previously approved by the Council under application 151670.

Residential Amenity

- 4.7 The proposed two storey rear extension would partially replace an existing single storey rear extension at the property. The sloped roof design of the first floor has also been staggered in order to ensure that there would be no significant adverse effect on the residential amenity of the adjacent terraced neighbour, in respect of loss of light, overbearing or overlooking.
- 4.8 The detached neighbour sited adjacent to the north is set back from the rear elevation of number 189. A 45 degree angle from the neighbour's rear window has been respected with regard to loss of light, and the sloped roof design would ensure that there would be no significant adverse effect on the residential amenity of the detached neighbouring dwelling, in respect of loss of light, overbearing or overlooking.

- 4.9 Internally, the resultant development would maintain and introduce bedroom accommodation which meet the Council's internal floor space standards. In addition, the proposed ground floor aspect of the extension would improve the communal kitchen and dining facilities for the occupiers. This layout has been previously approved by the Council under application 151670.
- 4.10 The proposed second floor dormers would serve two bedrooms in the roof space. These rooms are existing bedrooms and have sufficient head room clearance to provide a usable space, which will be enhanced by the proposed dormers. This accords with Policy DM8. This layout has been previously approved by the Council under application 151670.
- 4.11 The existing bedroom in the basement is lawful, and having only a half-submerged window, maintains an adequate level of natural light and outlook, along with suitable headroom, in accordance with policies DM4 and DM8. This layout has been previously approved by the Council under application 151670.
- 4.12 The proposed layout would also maximise where possible the stacking of similar types of rooms as required by Policies DM4 and DM8. The communal areas would be located to the rear of the ground floor, meaning that none of the bedrooms would need to be accessed from a communal area. In accordance with Policy DM8 there would be two communal rooms including the kitchen, with additional shared bathrooms for all of the residents. Combined with each bedroom area significantly exceeding the minimum floorspace requirements, this is considered to satisfy the policy standard regarding communal rooms. Each room would also have its own sink and an external window, providing an appropriate living environment for individual residents. Finally, the residents would benefit from the maintenance of the existing rear communal garden. Thus the proposed development would improve the shared private outdoor space for future residents, in accordance with Policy DM10.

Parking and Refuse Provision

- 4.13 Whilst the existing property does not benefit from any parking, the proposed extensions will increase the number of bedrooms by 2, from 7 to 9 bedrooms. The Council's Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD indicates that HMO developments incur a parking spaces requirement of 0.25 spaces per bedroom.
- 4.14 The property already benefits from two parking permits which at the Council's standard of 0.25 spaces per bedroom would address the parking demand of 8 of

the 9 bedrooms. Clearly it is not possible to provide 0.25 of an additional space, and given the site's close proximity to the Zone 1/Zone 2 border, high frequency bus routes, and within walking distance of Reading train station, it is considered the site is sufficiently sustainable, such that the additional 0.25 space is not justified.

- 4.15 Existing refuse provision is provided to the front of the property, which will be retained as part of the proposed development. This provides accessible and secure refuse storage for the residents, and ease of collection by the refuse lorry as part of the Council's normal collection service. This addresses the requirements of policies DM8 and CS18 as identified by checklist 17 of the Residential Conversions SPD.

Arboricultural Implications

- 4.16 The accompanying arboricultural report has surveyed the two trees within proximity of the proposed development, and concluded that no adverse impact would result from the application scheme (see report section 8), ensuring the trees' retention in accordance with policy CS38. The proposed extension footprint is the same as the single storey extension previously approved by the Council under application 151670, and as such the arboricultural implications would be no worse as a result of this development. Indeed the Arboricultural report concludes at section 8.5 "*There are no arboricultural reasons to prevent this scheme going forward.*"

Air Quality

- 4.17 The application site lies within the Air Quality Management Area, as addressed by policy DM19. It is considered that the proposed development would not adversely affect air quality by increasing emissions for the following reasons;
- a) The existing property is in residential use as an HMO and the proposal would retain this use.
 - b) The highway/parking demand of the proposal is insignificant compared to the existing
 - c) The lack of on-site parking actually results in a net benefit on air quality by deterring residents from owning a car
 - d) The highly sustainable location of the proposed development would result in a reduced need to travel

e) The above point is related to the fact that individual occupiers residing in a property are far more likely to use public transport than families travelling together

- 4.18 Consequently, it is considered the proposal accords with the requirements of policy DM19, and is appropriate in this respect.

CIL Charging Schedule

- 4.19 The proposal does not result in increased residential floorspace of above 100m², and as it does not create a new dwelling, it is concluded the proposed development is not CIL liable. The appropriate CIL questionnaire forms have been completed in association with the Council's validation requirements.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The application site consists of an existing lawful 7 bedroom House in Multiple Occupation. The proposed change of use to a 9 bedroom HMO with extensions would improve the living accommodation for the occupiers without detriment to the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residential dwellings.
- 5.2 The accompanying Arboricultural reports have demonstrated the development can be accommodated without adverse effects on either of the neighbouring trees.
- 5.3 The resultant bedrooms would all exceed the required floor space standards and the increased communal areas and private communal rear garden also contributes to a pleasant living environment in accordance with the Council's standards.
- 5.4 It is considered that Development Plan policies support the proposed development, with additional endorsement from National Guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for the proposed development.