

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Thames

App Ref: 240246/FUL

Address: 65 Kings Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DS

Proposals: Change of use from two flats to a single dwellinghouse (Class C3)

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

Date received (valid from): 11 March 2024 Target Decision date: 15 May 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Site visit photos:



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the amalgamation of two self-contained flats (C3 Use Class) to a single dwelling (C3 Use Class).

No external alterations are proposed. The property is to be altered internally to facilitate the conversion back to a single dwellinghouse. This consists of refitting rooms, removing internal doors and upstairs kitchen.

Plans considered
Location plan
As Received 27 February 2024

Existing Plans
Proposed Plans
As Received 11 March 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

07-01530-CLE (071549) - Certificate of lawfulness for 2 self-contained flats within building.
Certificate. GIVEN 15 January 2008

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

67 Kings Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DS
63a Kings Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DS
63 Kings Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DS

No letters of representation have been received.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC3: ADAPTION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
H2: DENSITY AND MIX
H7: PROTECTING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

H8: RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

SPG/SPD

Residential Conversions (2013)

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

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APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The application seeks the loss of two residential units and the formation of a single dwelling house. Policy H7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that “Planning permission will not be granted for any loss of residential accommodation or land unless there are exceptional circumstances. Planning permission will not be granted for a net loss in the number of residential units or gross floor area.”

Paragraph 4.4.56 of the Reading Borough Local Plan also states that; “(...) There may be exceptional circumstances where a loss of a limited amount of general residential would help to meet other key identified needs, for instance for a specific identified need for accommodation for vulnerable groups (see policy H6) or to reinstate a use more appropriate to the significance of a heritage asset, and this should be clearly demonstrated as part of any planning application.”

In this instance, the applicant has put forward that the need for larger 3-bed housing would outweigh the loss of the two one-bed flats. As outlined within Policy H2 of the Reading Local Plan, “*Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing set out in figure 4.6, in particular for family homes of three or more bedrooms.*” This is supported by the Berkshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2016) the need levels for 3-bedroom dwellings is significantly higher than all other dwelling sizes (42%). The development would also bring the dwelling back into its original and most viable use as a single family sized dwelling. The principle of the development proposed is acceptable.

Residential Conversions and Existing Housing Stock

In this instance, great weight is given to Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan when assessing the existing arrangement of 65 Kings Road as two self-contained one-bed flats. Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that;

“Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will only be acceptable where:

- The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features;*
- The proposal 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 residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;*
- *There is no 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; and*
- *The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.*

Additionally, in the case of conversions of houses to self-contained flats:

- *The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross;*
- *At least 25% of the units formed and, where there are 4 or fewer units at least one unit of accommodation, should be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bed rooms.*

65 Kings Road has a gross internal area of less than 120m² at ~100m², therefore the sub-division to two self-contained two-bed flats would not have been acceptable under Policy H8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. In this instance it is considered that the conversion back to a single dwelling is far more desirable than retaining 65 Kings Road as two self-contained one-bed flats.

The proposed development would result in a single two storey, three-bed dwelling with a gross internal area of more than 100m², which meets the minimum Nationally Described Space Standards for a two-storey 5 person dwelling.

Amenity

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity, which states that proposals are acceptable where they will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties with regard to various factors, including (amongst others):

- Privacy and overlooking
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of development
- Noise and disturbance
- Dust and fumes

The conversion of 65 Kings Road to a single dwelling is not considered to harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents along Kings Road, nor Queens Road to the south. It is considered that the conversion to one dwelling is more desirable than the retention of the property as two self-contained flats.

The proposal was further considered against the criteria specified within Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The proposed development would not harm the amenity of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The use of 65 Kings Road as a three bed, two storey dwelling is considered an acceptable use that would not unduly harm the living conditions of neighbouring properties as the proposed residential use is characteristic of the surrounding area.

Conclusion

The development has been assessed and the works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve