

12th May 2023

Planning Statement & Design and Access Statement

**144 Southampton Street
Reading RG1 2RD**

PLANNING STATEMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

144 Southampton Street is a late 19th century mid-terrace grade II listed building in 4 floors including a basement and a converted loft. It consists of a lounge, dining room, a kitchen in ground level, 3 bedrooms in first and second floor and a bathroom in first floor. The row of 142-146 terrace sets back from Southampton Street approximately 22m. They all have large rear gardens with approximately 18.5m depth.

A separate document (the Heritage Statement) details characteristics of this listed grade II building. The applicant has already requested a visit from the conservation architect who visited the site and has given him relevant guidance.

144 has been vacant for several years and has become derelict due to neglect. It needs necessary repairs and comprehensive refurbishment to stop the structure falling apart and give this property an extended life for many more years.

This application aims to convert the existing house into 4 HMOs with en suites. Being a grade II listed building; careful considerations have been given the methods of construction that would preserve the features, which are regarded as significant by Heritage

England and to sustainability of the proposed project. These are covered in the Heritage and Sustainability Statements.

2 THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

This part of Southampton Street is predominantly residential with a mix of terraced houses and blocks of apartments. Southampton Street is a one way road with flow of traffic towards Reading Town centre. 144 Southampton Street is within walking distance from town centre, which provides access to a variety of amenities, jobs, shops and leisure. The site measures 0.28 hectare. The rear garden of 144 is overgrown with shrubs and there are no significant trees present in this garden. The site has insignificant ecological value.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

The loft of 144 has been converted to create two additional bedroom in the past but there is no records available to provide the date of conversion.

4 PLANNING POLICIES

The following policies are considered to be relevant to this development, which substantiate that the new development is sustainable and ensures the occupants would have access to local amenities, jobs opportunities and vital local services.

- National planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework published in February 2019 confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (Paragraph 7).
- Paragraph 8 of the NPPF indicates that there are three overarching objectives to achieving sustainable development, these being: an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective.
- Paragraph 10 confirms that “at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.”
- Paragraph 11 indicates that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and for decision-taking this means “approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.
- Section 12 of the new NPPF is concerned with achieving well-designed places and Paragraph 124 confirms that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable

development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

- Paragraph 127 confirms (in part) that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments “are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping” and “are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities.)
- Section 16 of the new NPPF is concerned with conserving and enhancing the historic environment and, in respect of proposals affecting heritage assets. Paragraph 189 indicates that “in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”

Good design is also emphasised in the PPS advising that this should:

- Address the connections between people and places by considering the needs of people to access jobs and key services;
- Be integrated into the existing urban form and the natural and built environments;
- Be an integral part of the process for ensuring successful, safe and inclusive villages, towns and cities;
- Create an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society; and
- Consider the direct and indirect impact on the natural environment.

Turning to more localised policies, the development plan adopted by Reading Borough Council makes reference to the following policies:

- PPS 1 is clear that all new developments should be underpinned by the principle of sustainable development;
- PPS 1 supports the development or addition to existing buildings so that they may be brought back into use or, alternatively, undertake development that would secure the future use of that building;
- Planning Policy Statement 3, ‘Housing’, was introduced by Government in November 2006. Although this guidance is to replace the former PPG3 ‘Housing’, it is important to note that the actual date for formal adoption of PPS3 is the 1st April 2007 (as noted in paragraph 8).

PPS3 states that the planning system should deliver:

- “High quality housing that is designed and built to a high standard;
- Housing developments in suitable locations, which offer a good range facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure,”
- PPS3 is clear that the specific outcome of the planning system should be to deliver high quality housing that is built within accessible areas. New developments should aim to provide a mix of housing that will then be accessible to the market in order to address the specific housing requirements of the community;
- PPS3 continues to promote the key development theory of sustainability. The premise is that all new housing developments should be located in such a way that it is accessible to local amenities and employment opportunities.

PPS3 notes that the effective re-use of land is important in delivering sustainable and accessible development. In particular PPS3 Paragraph 31 states that:

- “Local Planning Authorities should develop positive policies to identify and bring into residential use empty housing and buildings...”
- PPS3 then notes that all new housing developments should be positioned in a way so as to ensure that they have access to local amenities such as key jobs, services and community facilities.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13, ‘Transport’ states that:

- PPG13 sets out the over arching principles of sustainable travel and methods of movement that should be considered when assessing development proposals.
- The key theme of sustainability, as noted in PPS1 is carried through PPG13 to ensure that developments are located in such a way so as to enable accessible movement.
- PPG13 also states “To promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously developed land, the focus for additional housing should be existing towns and cities. PPG 3 requires Local Planning Authorities to build in ways which exploit and deliver accessibility by public transport to jobs, education and health facilities, shopping, leisure and local services.”

PPG13 also requires Local Planning Authorities to:

- Movement in designing the layout of residential development; and;
- Seek to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling, by improving linkages by public transport between housing, jobs, local services and local amenity and by planning for mixed uses.”;
- The development site is located within an area of high accessibility to local amenities, employment opportunities, modes of public transport and also recreational open space.

DESIGN PROPOSAL

The conversion of the existing house into 4 HMOs makes an economical sense as it is

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situated close to Reading Town Centre and provides accommodation for those who have jobs in the centre of Reading and can walk or cycle to their place of employment rather than refurbishing it for a large family.

The proposed alteration to the ground floor is minimal. The existing front room will form a communal lounge; the rear room is intended to be used as a communal dining area and socializing. The existing kitchen is subdivided to create a toilet and leaving sufficient space for occasional cooking. The first and second floor rooms are converted to 4 individual private rooms each with its own en suite.

The front garden that is overgrown weed and shrubs would have a new drive way only to provide access for emergency vehicles in particular ambulance service and small delivery vehicles. The hard standing at the end of the drive provides sufficient space for vehicles to maneuver out the site in forward gear. Bins collection point is designed close to the main road that is within 9m reach of bins collection by the refuse vehicle. A secure bicycles shelter for 6 bicycles is provided at the end of the drive.

The rear garden will be landscaped with ornamental trees, shrubs to enhance the ecological value of the site. The rear garden also provides a patio area for residents for relaxation and socializing.

CONCLUSIONS

The proposed development makes use of a previously developed building and continues the existing residential use. It provides additional housing within the town centre as it is supported by policy PPG13.

The site location is in sustainable area of reading providing access to local amenities such as key jobs, services and community facilities as supported by policy PPS3.

The proposal complies with policy PPG13 and reduces car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling, by improving linkages by public transport between housing, jobs, local services and local amenity.

Overall, this proposal complies with all policies contained in NPPF and PPS1, PPS3 and PPG13 and therefore, it is requested that the Council grant permission for this application.