

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: 240088/FUL

Address: 17 St Johns Road, Reading, RG1 4EB

Proposals: Convert and change use of Class E ground floor and C3 dwelling first floor, into 1no. 3 bedroom house incorporating basement

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

Date received (valid from): 23 January 2024

Target Decision date: 17 April 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Site visit date: 09/02/2024

Site visit photos:



The application site is an end of terrace property located at the corner of St John's Street, and St John's Road, Reading. The site is within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. To the front of the site is an area of hardstanding which has replaced the front garden, and has been in use as parking facilitated by removal of boundary walls. The rear of the property is also in hardstanding, used for parking of 3 vehicles in what would have been the original rear garden. There is a single storey rear extension with a window facing the street. Further along St John's Road, and St John's Street, the properties appear to have been retained as dwellings with vegetated and enclosed front gardens. The site is opposite to the Grade II listed villa, the Oval, to the south and lies within the close vicinity/setting of Grade II Listed Church of St John the Evangelist.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development includes, in effect, and extension to a single dwelling, by way of conversion of most of the ground floor and basement as existing from Class E, to Class C3. The development as amended includes the provision of a low level front boundary wall, and rear boundary wall to enclose the rear garden area. There is one parking space proposed to be accessed via an existing dropped kerb at the rear of the rear of the site beyond the proposed garden area.

Plans considered:

Dwg No. 9295-113 - Proposed Section
Dwg No. 9295-112 - Proposed Elevations
Dwg No. 9295-110 - Proposed Roof Floor Plan
Dwg No. 9295-108 - Proposed Plans
Dwg No. 9295-107 - Existing Elevations
Dwg No. 9295-105 - Existing Roof Floor Plan
Dwg No. 9295-103 - Existing Ground Floor Plan
Dwg No. 9295-101 - Proposed Block Plan
Received 23 January 2024

Dwg No. 9295-101 - Proposed Block Plan
Dwg No. 9295-100 - Location Plan
Dwg No. 9295-112 - Proposed Elevations REV A
Dwg No. 9295-110 - Proposed Roof Floor Plan REV A
Dwg No. 9295-108 - Proposed Plans REV A
Received 30 January 2024

Dwg No. 9295-108 Proposed Plans REV B
Dwg No. 9295-101 Existing Block & Proposed Block Plan REV B
Dwg No. 9295-112 Proposed Elevations REV B
Received 09 April 2024

Dwg No. 9295-108 Proposed Plans REV C
Dwg No. 9295-101 Existing Block & Proposed Block Plan REV C
Dwg No. 9295-112 Proposed Elevations REV C
Received 10 May 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

89/0886/FD (890349) - Change of use from shop, offices and storage to Foot Clinic, with associated alterations and improvements. Permitted 21/9/1989

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

33 St Johns Road, Reading, RG1 4EB
19 St Johns Road, Reading, RG1 4EB

No letters of representation have been received.

Internal consultees

RBC Transport

No objections subject to conditions.

This application seeks a change of use from Class E (ground floor) and C3 (first floor residential unit) in to a 3 bedroom C3 single dwelling.

The site is situated on the corner of St Johns Road & St Johns Street. The site is located within the Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough, consisting primarily of retail and commercial office developments with good transport hubs.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would require 2 x off road parking spaces.

The Design and Access statement states that 2 off road parking spaces will be made available, and existing provision as indicated in Plan 9295-103 also identifies 2 parking spaces, however the submitted proposed ground floor plan 9295-108 Rev A only illustrates 1 parking space.

Given the site is located in a CPZ area where the Councils Residential Permit Scheme operates and there are extensive parking restrictions preventing and controlling unauthorised parking, one parking space can be accepted in this instance, however the applicant should be made aware that future occupants of the dwelling will not be eligible to apply for resident or visitor parking permits.

Parking areas are accessed from St Johns Street via an existing vehicle crossing. The length of the vehicle crossing will need to be reduced to facilitate one parking space and the kerb line reinstated and realigned with the footway. A license from the Councils Highway Team will be required to undertake all works on the public highway. Revised plans required illustrating new width of access (should not be more than 3m). I am happy to deal with this by way of condition.

In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a minimum of 2.0 cycle parking. In a development of this nature this can be provided in the form of a garden shed in the private rear garden. This has been illustrated on plans and is deemed acceptable.

Bin storage should comply with Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings and should be located no further than 15m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods. Bin storage area has been illustrated on plans in the rear garden area, the collection area has not, however it is assumed it will be presented for collection adjacent to the parking bay. It should be noted that it is not permitted for bins to be stored on the footway. Collection area to be illustrated on plans. I am happy to deal with this by way of condition.

A CMS will be required for this development.

RBC Conservation Advisor

Summary:

Objection and Clarifications Required - The proposal is acceptable in principle but needs revisions to the proposed materials, elements (both to be removed and added) and proposed

plot layout. The proposed development needs clarification as it would result in less than substantial harm at the moderate level to the character and appearance of the conservation area and settings of the listed building. Please note this harm would be reduced to moderate to low levels or eliminated via proposed revisions.

The proposed development, by reason of the removal of original elements, unsuitable fenestration materials and lack of details, would conflict with policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 of the local plan and would not meet the requirements of paragraph 208 of the NPPF as there is no defined public benefit.

Amendments received reflecting the above comments.

RBC Waste

No Objections.

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:

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

H7: PROTECTING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK
H8: RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS
H9: HOUSE EXTENSIONS AND ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE
TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Residential Conversions (2013)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Other Local Documents

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal (2007)
Listing NGR: SU7234973146 - The Oval

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.

APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The existing ground floor of the premise was last in use by the Queen Victoria Institute Fund for the provision of a senior citizens podiatry centre. The existing use was permitted under 89/0886/FD as a personal consent for the registered charity. The charity has since, due to Covid-19, been forced to shut all clinics it operated. As such, now the clinic has ceased use of the ground floor, the use would revert to that of a Class E. The use of the site as Class E is not considered Employment Land in the context of Policy EM3.

The loss of the minor amount of Class E on the site, for the provision of an improved family sized dwellings is considered acceptable in this instance subject to matters addressed below.

Design and Impacts on Conservation Area

Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan (2019) requires “*All development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located*”.

Policy EN1 of the Reading Local Plan (2019) requires “*Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced*”.

Policy EN3 of the Reading Local Plan (2019) states: “*The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*”.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2023) 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.

Paragraph 203 requires local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 205 of the NPPF requires that 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation....' And paragraph 206 says, 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration...) should require clear and convincing justification'. Paragraph 208 says that 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal...' National Planning Practice Guidance on Historic Environment provides context to the NPPF.

The proposed development, albeit the conversion and integration of the ground floor and basement into an existing flat to increase the size of the dwelling, is also re-instatement of the original use of the site as a single family sized 3-bed dwelling.

The proposed development would be facilitated by raising the ground floor level to facilitate basement accommodation. Externally, the re-instatement of a front boundary brick wall, a rear garden wall to most of the rear of the property, and a open parking space to the end of the garden. There would also be two additional windows to the side within the old single storey extension (kitchen and dining room) as well as the installation of a window to give light to the rear of the basement. An expanded lightwell would be installed to the front of the building to provide light to the front of the basement. An enlarged window would face onto the enclosed rear garden, with an double door also allowing access from the kitchen to the rear garden. The garden area is proposed to include bicycle storage, and bin storage for the dwelling. Some soft landscaping is proposed to the front garden and rear garden. Limited details of materials of proposed external alterations have been provided.

Overall, the proposed external alterations would represent a positive contribution to the conservation area and the setting of the nearby listed building, restoring the property to a single dwelling. Further details of the materials will be required prior to commencement of the development to ensure that the proposal will contribute completely to the conservation area, including installation of timber windows, matching character bricks and mortar (for front and rear garden enclosures), and appropriate balustrading for the front lightwell.

As such, it is considered that the development would comply with Policies CC7, EN1, EN3 and the abovementioned NPPF requirements.

Amenity Considerations

Policy H8 and CC8 require considerations be given to residential amenity for residents. Particularly in this instance, daylight and sunlight, and privacy are considered relevant. The proposal would be a single residential use, and would be afforded significant light to the upper floors and ground floor compared to other terraced buildings by virtue of being an end of terrace. The proposed basement includes a bedroom, and additional common room within the basement. The bedroom would be located to the front, and would be served by the expanded lightwell. The rear room would not be designated a bedroom, though could be used as such by future residents. This room is served by a side facing window. As sleeping rooms,

or other ancillary rooms for a single dwelling it is not considered that this would be unduly harmful to the amenity of future residents and would be acceptable in this regard.

In terms of external amenity space, policy H10 requires dwellings to be provided with functional outdoor space, and that outdoor space respect the size and character of similar spaces. The conversion of most of the garden space to outdoor private amenity space would be similar to other terraced properties, and similar to other end-of-terrace dwellings which also contain off-road parking.

Access, parking and highways matters

The proposed development includes one (1) car parking space, provision of a bicycle storage enclosure within the rear garden. The site is within close proximity to Reading Town Centre, and high frequency bus routes along Kings Road, Eldon Road, and London Road. The Local Plan, and Revised Parking Standards SPD (2011) requires 2 parking spaces for the proposed dwelling. Though this is noted, the provision of 2 parking spaces would contradict policies relating to design and impacts on the conservation area, and provision of open space. As such, in this instance one parking space is considered appropriate and acceptable. Bicycle storage would meet the local plan and SPD requirements.

The car parking space is accessed via an existing dropped kerb. This dropped kerb is currently ~7.5m in length. This will need to be reduced to the width of the proposed parking area. This will be secured by condition.

Due to the limited on-street parking, and limited site area, a construction management plan will be required, and is recommended to be secured by condition.

Sustainability

The proposed development is a minor conversion from part office, part dwelling to a single dwelling. In accordance with Policy CC2, a SAP assessment should be provided as the most appropriate rating system for a conversion. This is recommended to be secured by condition.

Other Matters

Given the constrained nature of the site, it has been considered appropriate to consider limiting Permitted Development rights to ensure no inappropriate additions are added.

Conclusion

As outlined above, the proposal includes the extension of a flat by change of use, and use of the terraced property as a single dwelling in accordance with its original state. Thus reinstating its optimal viable use.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve