

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Coley

App Ref: 231670/FUL

Address: 10 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP

Proposals: Conversion of a 3 storey, 5 bedroom terrace house into three self-contained flats, one two-bedroom apartment and two one-bedroom apartments.

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

Date received (valid from): 20 November 2023

Target Decision date: 29 March 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

Site visit date: 08/01/2024

Site visit photos:



The application site is a two-storey 5 bedroom with loft accommodation Victorian mid-terraced property. It is significantly extended, with two-storey rear extension, shared with no. 12 Argyle Street, and a significant flat roof dormer extension (221441/CLP) above both the rear facing original roof and the two-storey rear extension which, combined with the existing loft accommodation is in effect a third storey.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks approval for the conversion of the existing dwelling into three (3) no. self-contained flats, one two-bedroom flat and two one-bedroom flats. The proposed two-bed flat at ground floor would have access to the small rear courtyard, and is 61.5m², the upper floor one-bed flats are 45.5m² and 44.6m² respectively. The proposal included bin store for 6 no. bins within the front courtyard, and bicycle storage within the rear garden for all flats.

Plans Considered

Dwg No. FP - 221 - 001 - Existing Plans and Location Plan

Dwg No. FP - 221 - 002 - Proposed Plans and Block Plan

Received 21 November 2023

Dwg No. FP - 221 - 002 - Proposed Plans Rv7

Received 12 February 2024

Bicycle Store Details dated 18/03/2024, 20:28

10 Argyle Street FP - 221 - 002 - Proposed Plans Rv8

Received 18 March 2024

10 Argyle Street FP - 221 - 002 - Proposed Plans Rv9

Received 22 March 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

221441/CLP - Certificate of lawfulness for a proposed L-shaped roof dormer. Certificate given 21/11/2022

221467/FUL - Conversion of a 3 storey, 5 bedroom terrace house into three self-contained flats, one two-bedroom apartment and two one-bedroom apartments. Withdrawn 26/5/2023

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

2 Ormsby Street, Reading, RG1 7YR

12 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP

8 Argyle Street, Reading, RG1 7YP

No letters of representation have been received.

Internal Consultees

Transport

"The application is for the conversion of the existing single dwelling into 3 x 1 and 2 bedroom self-contained units.

The property is situated close to the junction with Oxford Road and is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD and close to the junction with Oxford Road. Zone 2 directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading.

Argyle Street and the surrounding road network are located within an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area. In accordance with the adopted SPD, the development would be required to provide parking provision of 1 space for each proposed unit, equating to total requirement of 3 off road parking spaces. Although not stated, it would appear that there is no off-road parking associated with this property.

The development site is located in an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area; Zone 08R. Under the Borough's current parking standards, this proposal would generate additional pressure for parking in the area, therefore if this application is approved there

should be an assumption that any future occupants of the proposed units will not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits which should be covered by condition and an informative applied. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighboring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area. Given the restriction in place preventing unauthorised on street parking a car free development can be considered in this instance.

In accordance with the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision of 0.5 cycle storage space should be provided per 1 and 2 flat, given the car-free nature of the proposal, the proposed development should provide a minimum of 3 cycle parking spaces for the development.

The Design and Access statement states that cycle storage will be provided in the form of a single Sheffield stand in the front garden of the property for the units on the upper floors with storage for bicycles in the rear garden area. Plans do not illustrate that the Sheffield stands are covered. All cycle storage should be provided in accordance with the Councils current standards, covered and secured. Revised plans are required illustrating covered and secure cycle storage units in the front and rear garden areas and bins storage/collection. The waste collection team should be contacted to ensure the correct provision and capacity of bins are being provided. Revised plans are required.

Please ask the applicant to submit revised plans addressing the comments above.

Following revised plans, no objections subject to conditions.”

Waste

“Please be advised that this is acceptable.”, as per response to application 221467

Environmental Protection

“Refer to Standing Advice”

“Noise and dust during demolition and construction

The applicants should submit a statement detailing how noise and dust will be effectively managed during demolition (if relevant) and construction and who will be responsible for this. We recommend the following conditions:

□ C2 CONSTRUCTION METHOD STATEMENT (TO BE SUBMITTED)

No development shall commence on site, including any works of demolition, until a site specific Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for

- a) Required measures to control the emission of dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants during demolition and construction; [EP REQUIREMENT]
- b) Provisions to be made for the control of noise coming from the site during demolition and construction; [EP REQUIREMENT]
- c) Full details of pest control measures following any demolition required. Where necessary, capping of drains/sewers and baiting arrangements. [EP REQUIREMENT]

The measures within the approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or

neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety in accordance with Policy CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

▣ **C1 HOURS OF CONSTRUCTION/DEMOLITION**

No construction, demolition or associated deliveries shall take place outside the hours of [0800hrs to 1800hrs] Mondays to Fridays, and [0800hrs to 1300hrs] on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to protect occupiers of nearby properties from unreasonable disturbance from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

▣ **C4 NO BONFIRES**

No materials or green waste produced as a result of the clearance of the site, demolition works or construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall be burnt on site.

REASON: In the interests of air quality, the amenity of neighbours, and to promote more sustainable approaches to waste management in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

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: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE

CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN15: AIR QUALITY

EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES

H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING

H2: DENSITY AND MIX

H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING
H8: RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE
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

Relevant Conservation Area Appraisal

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 application site is situated in an area made up of a diverse mix of single dwellings, HMOs and flats/apartments. The proposed scheme seeks to convert a single dwelling to three flats.

Policy H8 requires properties to be converted to be in excess of 120 square metres (gross), which this property is. Policy H8 also requires 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 bedrooms. One unit (33%) is a two-bed flat.

Paragraph 6.2 of the Residential Conversions SPD states that; “Outside the areas covered by an Article 4 direction relating to small HMOs, planning permission for a conversion of a dwellinghouse to flats or to a large HMO will not normally be granted where any of the following apply:

- **The proportion of houses within a 50m radius of the application site that are in use as HMOs or which have been converted to flats would exceed 50%;**
- The application is for an HMO and the area falls within the 30% most deprived areas in England according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation; or
- There is other evidence of dilution or harm of a mixed and sustainable community.

In this regard, the total number of properties within the 50m radius, including the application site, has been calculated as 46. This figure does not include buildings that are not classified as a dwelling (for example buildings under Use Class E) and purpose-built flats. A total number of 22 HMOs or flat conversions within a 50m radius of the proposal site have been identified. The estimated total percentage of existing HMOs and converted flats within a 50m radius of 10 Argyle Street is 48%, the proposed conversion to flats at 10 Argyle Street would increase this to 50%. As a result, the proposed increase in HMOs and flat conversions would not exceed 50% within a 50m radius of the proposal site. Therefore, it is not considered that the proposed development would have a harmful impact upon the character of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The

threshold estimate has been calculated in accordance with the guidance provided within paragraphs 6.3 to 6.9 and Appendix 3 of the Residential Conversions SPD (March 2023).

As such in principle the conversion of the property is acceptable, provided that the scheme complies with the other Policies set out within the Local Plan.

Character and Appearance of the Area

In accordance with Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, development will be assessed to ensure that it (amongst other matters):

- *Respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm;*
- *Are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces, the inclusion of public art and appropriate materials and landscaping*

No external alterations are proposed to the main building as part of this application. As no external alterations are proposed, the development does not alter the existing character and appearance of the surrounding area. The external appearance of the property will therefore be preserved.

The proposed development would result in the storage of bins. The bin storage would be unenclosed and screened by a proposed hedge. In accordance with checklist 18 from the Residential Conversions SPD (2023) *“Sufficient and suitable refuse containers should be provided within the curtilage of the application building which are easily accessible for all occupants of the house and the refuse collectors and ensuring they are sympathetically located with regard to their visual impact.”*

The SPD also notes that *“... consideration should include the cumulative effects of bin storage as a result of neighbouring conversions.”* It is noted that the area, by virtue of the high level of conversions and HMOs has resulted in a large number of bins within the area. Notably, opposite the site where there are multiple bins at no’s 9, and 13 and 15. On the side of the application site, no’s 2, 4, and 8 have above single dwelling bin storage. Where no. 12 has a rear area for bin storage. The conversion to three dwellings in this instance would provide 6 regular wheelie bins within the front area, and food waste bins for each dwelling, which could be stored internally. This would mean a net increase in four bins for the site. Though it is additional visual clutter, it is not considered that this increase would have a significant harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area. Given no.8 has already been converted, and the threshold is now met, it is unlikely approval would be given for additional conversions in the area also, therefore this limited impact could be the last additional bins for the immediate vicinity and should be acceptable.

The development is therefore in accordance with Policies CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

Safeguarding Amenity

Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) 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:

- *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 bedrooms.*

As discussed in above, this development concerns a property that has a gross internal area greater than 120m², with one of the three units proposed having 2 bedrooms.

The Residential Conversions SPD sets out a number of checklist items which provide further detail related to adopted policies CC8, H8 and H10 and the relevant ones to this proposal are as follows.

Room Sizes

The bedrooms for each flat have an area of 8m² or more, the kitchen/lounge and dining areas are also suitably sized with all rooms complying with the Nationally Described Space Standards.

Amenity Space

It is noted, due to the constrained nature of the site, the ground floor flat would have sole access to the amenity space. With upper floor flats having no private balcony or communal space. Given the proximity of the site to the Town Centre, and likely unacceptability of raised terraces, it is considered acceptable to have a layout as proposed. Existing open space is also provided at Victoria Park Recreation Ground and Beresford Road playground, both ~550m from the site.

External windows

All habitable rooms would benefit from external windows.

Access to sunlight/daylight

This would be acceptable for proposed residents.

Layout/Stacking of Rooms

The Council's SPD seeks to avoid layouts which locate living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens, next to, above, or below, proposed or neighbouring bedrooms. The layout achieves this. Bedrooms and habitable rooms are stacked on top of each other, with the bathrooms also stacked on top of each other.

Noise and disturbance

The use of the building as a whole would remain residential and as discussed above the layout and stacking of the rooms means that any noise and disturbance between the occupants would be minimal. Sound proofing between floors would be required under Building Regulations.

Bin storage

Bin storage has been indicated on the plans to the front of the building and is sufficient to accommodate the required bins.

Neighbouring Residents

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 including factors (amongst others):

- Privacy and overlooking
- Access to sunlight and daylight
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development
- Noise and disturbance; and
- Crime and safety

By virtue of the building and flat roof rear dormer being extant, and that the provision of additional persons residing in the building would be similar to that of the use a large HMO, or house with high occupancy, there would be no additional privacy concerns presented by the proposal. As such, the proposal is considered to meet the above requirements and complies with Policy CC7 of the Local Plan (2019).

Transport

As stated in the response from Transport Development Control, there are no in principle objections to the scheme from a transport or highways perspective. The waste storage area has been approved by Waste Services. The cycle storage provision proposed is in line with the requirements of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011). There is no parking provided for the development, by virtue of its location, and arrangement, and due to its highly accessible location is suitable as a car free development. There would be no entitlement to parking permits for the future occupants. Subject to conditions, the development is considered in accordance with Policies TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Conclusion

The proposal would provide three flats within a highly accessible area, benefited by a high level of services, public and private. The flats would be of a suitable size for amenity of future residents, and would contribute toward a family sized two-bedroom unit with a private amenity space. The proposal would provide a large number of bins within the small front garden, and some hedging. This would add to the visual clutter within the street, though would retain the front brick wall as an attractive character feature. The minor amount of additional visual clutter, is not considered to generate significant harm to warrant refusal, and on balance the provision of housing would outweigh any harm of this bin storage arrangement.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant