

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park

App Ref: 231663/FUL & 231664/LBC

Address: White House, 41 Eastern Avenue, Reading, RG1 5RX

Proposals: Proposed change of use from healthcare clinic with residential over to single residential unit

Case Officer: Marcie Rejwerska

Date received (valid from): 8 February 2024 Target Decision date: 3 May 2024 (ext.)

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a two-storey, semi-detached property on the east side of Eastern Avenue. The property is Grade II listed and the listing reads as follows:

READING EASTERN AVENUE SU 77 SW (East Side) 17/610 Nos 39 and 41 (White House chiropractic surgery) Pair of semi-detached houses, no. 41 now surgery with flat above. 1845 (deeds) with C20 additions. Stuccoed brick, Welsh slate roof - 2 storeys, 6 bays with lower, set-back, side bays and an added lower bay to either end; rear range added 1923. Main range: narrow vertical recess divides properties; sashes with glazing bars in raised surrounds with ends of cills breaking forward on brackets; entrances at either end have internal porches with pilasters supporting entablature, narrow round-arched openings in return walls (no. 41's with Art Nouveau glazing) and, inside, 2 steps up to door of 4 flush panels under overlight with glazing bars (porch of no. 39 has black and white marbled floor); hipped oversailing roof with central, brick, cross-ridge stack. Side wings have a sash on each floor, of 12 panes to ground floor and 9 unequally-hung panes to 1st floor; roofs have hipped ends and brick stacks to rear. Additions to either side have monoclinical roofs, the left one blind the right one with C20 1st floor oculus.

Listing number: 1248720

The property currently comprises a ground floor and first floor flat, and is set back from the road by way of a gravel driveway. There are two trees on site which are subject to TPO. The site is also within the South Park Conservation Area. A Green Link runs across the rear of the site.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission and Listed Building Consent are sought for the proposed change of use to a single family dwelling (C3 use class). The description describes the existing uses as healthcare clinic on ground floor with flat above, however, the ground floor is currently in use as a residential flat and this use is unauthorised.

No external alterations are proposed. Internal alterations include removal of the entrance hallway partition wall, removal of the infill to the ground floor lounge partition wall, and reconfiguration of kitchens and bathrooms to reflect the change of use.

Plans considered:

Planning Statement, dated 21/11/2023, received 22/11/2023

Heritage Assessment, Archway Heritage, dated 02/02/2024, received 08/02/2024

SU7372NW - Land Registry Title Plan, dated 07/07/2022, received 20/11/2023
AA.10 Rev A - Site/Block Plan, dated 16/03/2024, received 16/03/2024
AA.17 - Existing Lounge Room Elevations, dated 18/03/2024, received 18/03/2024
AA.14 - Existing Elevations, dated 18/11/2023, received 20/11/2023
AA.11 - Existing Basement Layout, dated 18/11/2023, received 20/11/2023
AA.12 - Existing Ground Floor Layout, dated 18/11/2023, received 20/11/2023
AA.13 - Existing First Floor Layout, dated 18/11/2023, received 20/11/2023
AA.18 - Proposed Dining Room Elevations, dated 18/03/2024, received 18/03/2024
AA.16 - Proposed First Floor Layout, dated 18/11/2023, received 16/03/2024
AA.15 - Proposed Ground Floor Layout, dated 18/11/2023, received 20/11/2023

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

0000009599 - Conversion into 2 flats - Unconditional consent granted on 25/05/1962

230114 & 230192 - Erection of new boundary wall at rear of back garden - Planning permission and Listed Building consent granted on 27/4/23

231050 - T1 - Lime tree located in the driveway - remove this tree due to poor condition and extent of dead and dying branches in its canopy - Approved

4. CONSULTATIONS

Non-statutory:

RBC Conservation Officer - No objection subject to conditions.

RBC Transport Development Control - No objection subject to conditions.

Public:

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

84 Hamilton Road, Reading, RG1 5RD
58b Eastern Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5SE
58c Eastern Avenue, Reading, RG1 5SE
58A Eastern Avenue, Reading, RG1 5SE
82 Hamilton Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5RD
86 Hamilton Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5RD
80 Hamilton Road, Reading, RG1 5RD
39 Eastern Avenue, Reading, RG1 5RX
43 Eastern Avenue, Reading, RG1 5RX

No letters of representation received.

The applicant displayed a site notice on site.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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.

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

Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance 2008

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK

EN14: TREES, HEDGES AND WOODLAND

H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING

H2: DENSITY AND MIX

H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING

H7: PROTECTING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE

OU1: NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Other Local Documents

South Park Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

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

The main issues to be considered are:

1. Principle of development
2. Character, design and heritage implications
3. Residential amenity

4. Other matters: Trees and Transport

1. Principle of development

Policy H7 states *“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.”*

Policy H2 is also relevant and states *“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.”*

Furthermore, Policy OU1 is also relevant, and states *“Proposals involving the redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses will not be permitted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain that facility.”*

The property had previously operated as a healthcare clinic at ground floor, however that use was lost in 2023. The healthcare clinic had never been granted planning permission and therefore its loss is not considered to contravene Policy OU1. The property currently comprises a 2-bedroom first floor flat and a 2-bedroom ground floor flat, the latter also unauthorised, and considered to provide poor quality accommodation. The proposal would result in a 4-bedroom dwelling. On balance, the proposed change is considered acceptable, as it will replace one relatively small unit, and one unauthorised unit with much-needed family-sized accommodation.

The principle of development is, therefore, accepted.

2. Character, design and heritage implications

The proposal is considered against adopted local policies relating to both design and conservation of historic buildings.

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires all development to be of high quality design and maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In this specific case; this concerns the following components:

- Layout
- Landscape
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials

Policy EN1 states *“Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings.”*

Policy EN3 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.”*

Furthermore, NPPF para 205 states *“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 the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).”*

There are no external alterations proposed, and therefore the impact on the character of the property, the wider street scene and consequently the conservation area, is considered minimal.

The proposed internal alterations are considered necessary to bring the property back into use as a single residential unit. The partition wall which divides the entrances to the ground and first floor is not an original feature and, therefore, its removal is considered acceptable.

It is evident that the partition wall between the existing lounge and dining room on the ground floor was infilled. The proposal includes removal of the infilled portion of the wall only - this is considered a positive improvement to the property.

The proposed development would benefit the Grade II listed building at 41 Eastern Avenue by reinstating its original and most viable use and partially bringing back the original internal layout of the building. As such, the proposal would meet the requirements of the Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, and the objectives of Chapter 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

3. Residential amenity

Policy CC8 states *“Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:*

- Privacy and overlooking;*
- Access to sunlight and daylight;*
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
- Harm to outlook;*
- Noise and disturbance;...”*

As no external alterations are proposed, the fenestration layout remains as existing and, therefore, there is no identified risk of harm. The existing fenestration is considered to provide adequate access to natural sunlight/daylight. As the arrangement is existing, there is no identified risk of overlooking or loss of privacy to the neighbouring properties. The noise impacts are not considered significantly different from the existing use of the property.

Other matters

Trees: There are existing mature trees on site, a couple of which are subject to TPO. A construction phase Tree Protection Plan has been submitted which is considered sufficient to protect the RPAs of the trees on site during the construction phase of the proposed development.

Transport: The property has an existing gravel driveway which provides 3 off-road parking spaces, which is in excess of the policy requirement for 2 off-road parking spaces in this area of Reading. Pre-commencement conditions are recommended to secure details of cycle and refuse storage.

Conclusion

The proposal has been considered against the above adopted policies and is considered to accord with those policies. The recommendation is therefore made to grant planning permission and Listed Building Consent.

RECOMMENDATION
GRANT PERMISSION AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Subject to the following conditions:

231663/FUL:

1. Time Limit Standard
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials to match
4. Tree protection as specified
5. Cycle parking to be approved
6. Refuse and recycling to be approved
7. EV charging details to be submitted

231664/LBC:

1. Time Limit Listed Building
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials to match
4. Details of utilities to be submitted
5. Schedule of works to be submitted