

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: PL/24/1085 Full planning permission

Address: 7 Cardigan Gardens, Reading, RG1 5QP

Proposal: Proposed conversion of two flats back to a single residence terrace house

Applicant: Mr Nigel Belcher

Received date: 2024-08-21

Target Decision date: 2024-10-22

Case Officer: Gary Miles

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is a two-storey, bay fronted, Victorian terraced dwellinghouse, located to the east of Gardigan Gardens. The property is constructed of red and yellow patterned brickwork with slate tiled pitched roofs. The property benefits from an average size rear garden which benefits from a southerly facing aspect. The property being Victorian terraced offers no off-street parking. Many properties in the street have been subject to refurbishments and/or extensions. Cardigan Gardens appears to be residential made up of single properties or converted into flats for homeowners and, or university student accommodation. The property is not listed, nor within a conservation area.

Site photographs:



Existing front elevation



Existing outer front door



Two existing doors into flats 1 & 2

A site visit was carried out on the 12th September 2024. The internal layout matches with the existing plans provided.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for the change of use from 2 No. self-contained 1-bedroom flats to 1 No. single, 3-bedroom family dwellinghouse. Whilst the proposal does not involve enlarging the existing building or the existing footprint, it does include the following:

- New opening for a new upvc window at first floor level to the rear elevation.
- Removal of existing bathroom windows to rear ground floor elevation and replace with upvc French doors allowing access into the garden.



- Existing first floor bedroom window to the westerly elevation to be reduced in depth and replaced with new upvc window to newly created shower room.
- Remodelling of internal space at ground floor and first floor level.

Plans & Documents considered:

Location Plan, dated 9th Aug 24
Supporting Letter from agent, dated 14th Aug 24
Drawing No. NB2024/01, dated 14th Aug 24
CIL Form, dated 14th Aug 24
Received by the local Planning Authority on 21st August 24

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/08/1265 – Certificate of Lawfulness for subdivision of property into 2x 1-bedroom flats – Permitted August 2008

4. CONSULTATIONS

9 Cardigan Gardens, Reading, RG1 5QP
5 Cardigan Gardens, Reading, RG1 5QP

No letters of representation have been received.

RBC Transport

The proposal consists of the Change of use from 2 x 3 C3 Flats into a single residential dwelling.

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. The site is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. The site is also within easy walking distance of the Town Centre.

In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 2 spaces, however there is no off-street parking associated with this property. The proposed changes are all internal and will not change the current parking provision in place. It should be noted that Cardigan Gardens is part of the Councils Residential Parking Scheme. The Councils Permit team have confirmed that the property is currently excluded from the permit scheme (as the property is listed in use as flats). The property would be eligible to park on street subject to successful application.

There are no Transport objections to this application.

RBC Housing

No comments received at time of writing report.

5. 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 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.

6. 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

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
H2 Density and mix
H7 Protecting the Existing Housing Stock
H8 Residential Conversions
H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking)

SPG/SPD

Residential Conversions SPD (2013)

7. APPRAISAL

a) Principle

The proposal is for the conversion of three self-contained flats into a single, 3-bedroom family dwellinghouse. The principle of this change needs to be assessed against Policy H7, which 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."*

The supporting text at paragraph 4.4.56 gives some examples of exceptional circumstances including *"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."* It is considered that whilst the proposal results in the net loss of two dwellings, the conversion results in a number of improvements, which are material to the assessment, and are considered to weigh in its favour in the planning balance and are set out below.

The conversion of the property back to its original use as a 3-bedroom family dwelling ensures a positive contribution to the character of the area, compared to the flats, and would accord with criteria set out under Policy H8, which requires that conversions do not result in the loss of single-family housing nor harm the mixed and sustainable communities. The thrust of the RBLP policy is the provision of family housing and Policy H2 states that *"Wherever possible, residential development should contribute towards meeting the needs for the mix of housing, in particular for family homes of*

three or more bedrooms". The provision of a three-bed house, therefore, fulfils this need more than the existing one-bed flats.

b) Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 states that development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties.

The conversion to a family dwelling reduces the intensification of activity associated with flat conversions, which in turn improves the amenity for adjoining residents, and reintroduces an improved internal layout with appropriate stacking and the provision of suitable external amenity space available to all occupants.

As a single-family unit, it therefore, improves the quality of the accommodation for occupants and has positive benefits for neighbouring residents.

The proposal does not involve enlarging the existing building or any external changes, apart from creation of one new window to a bedroom, swapping out windows for windows and swapping out windows to French doors, therefore there are no identified risks in relation to overbearing effects, loss of light, or privacy concerns.

It is also considered that the conversion of this site into a single-family dwelling does not have any detrimental impacts on the parking arrangements on the street.

c) Character and Appearance

Policy CC8 states 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.

The proposal to convert the property back to a single-family dwelling only involves minor external changes to existing windows and doors and therefore, there are no impacts on the character and appearance of the building.

8. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be in accordance with the relevant policies and acceptable on that basis.

9. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT

Recommended Conditions:

TL1
AP1
M3