

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park

App Ref: PL/24/0684 Full planning permission

Address: 8 Crescent Road, Reading, RG1 5SP

Proposal: Change of use from C3 dwelling house (two bedroom house) to C4 small HMO (four bedroom house, 6 people) with rear ground floor extension, replacement of window with door to back garden and removal of two chimney stacks.

Applicant: Mr Giorgi Chitidze

Extended Target Decision date: 30/10/2024

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site comprises a two storey end of terrace dwelling with two bedrooms, 1 bathroom and 2 reception room, approx. total floor area of 73 sqm and a long garden at 8 Crescent Road. It is situated opposite Alfred Sutton School.

It is located in an Article 4 area (covering parts of Park, Redlands and Katesgrove wards), which removes permitted development rights to convert a house (C3 use) into a small house in multiple occupation (C4 use).

The property is not listed and is not within a conservation area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for a change of use from C3 dwelling house (two bedroom house) to C4 small HMO (four bedroom house, 6 people) with rear ground floor extension, replacement of window with door to back garden and removal of two chimney stacks. External works to enlarge the ground floor rear footprint have previously been granted permission under 240277. As the works to the rear extension have not yet been completed, the proposed plans are provided as part of the change of use application.

Submitted plans and documents

AA011 Planning Policy statement, PG Architecture

PL001 Rev 1 Location plan

PL003 Rev 1 Site plan

~~PL200 Rev 1 Existing and proposed plans, with extension permitted under 240277~~

PL050 Re 1 HMO Threshold Area check

CIL

As received 28 May 2024

AAAIA8CRE Arboricultural impact assessment and method statement, allarboriculture

~~PL201 Rev 1 Proposed plan~~

PL300 Rev 1 Daylight factor analysis

PL100 Rev 1 Existing plans

PL220 Rev 1 Existing elevations

PL221 Rev 1 Proposed elevations

As received 6 August 2024

~~PL201 Rev 2 Proposed plan~~

As received 1 October 2024

PL201 Rev 3 Proposed plan

Photo top of under stairs cupboard

Photo of under stair storage

Under stair storage plan dimensions

Bike store

As received 2 October 2024

Relevant Planning history

240277 Single storey wrap-around extension (half fill infill) to extend 4 meters beyond the current closest wing, replacement of the dining room window with door to back garden and removal of two chimney stacks. Permitted 10/05/2024

3. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was emailed to the agent and was displayed at the site on 9 August 2024 for the statutory period and the following addresses were consulted by letter:

- 6, 10, Crescent Road & 144 Wokingham Road

No letters of objection have been received. A neighbour queried the potential impact on the neighbouring property.

The following were consulted:

- HMO team Consultations – No objection. It is likely that the works set out in this application will also require approval from the Council's building control office to ensure compliance with any relevant building regulations. It is therefore assumed that concerns about fire safety, means of escape, ventilation and sound insulation will be reviewed and addressed by building control if works proceed. Confirmation was provided to confirm whether all floor space and standing cupboard areas are included when measuring the size of a proposed HMO.
- Transport Development Control – No objection subject to conditions relating to parking, cycle storage and parking permits due to local parking congestion.
- Environmental Protection Consultations – No objections subject to necessary insulation and separation of the communal room from neighbouring properties to avoid the impact of noise on surrounding neighbours.
- Waste – No objection subject to sufficient bin and recycling provision required.

Discussion with the agent – Amended plans were submitted to provide more private space for the rear ground floor room, and to provide acceptable cycle and waste/recycling provision. The internal layout was also amended to reduce disturbance and any detrimental impact for the amenity of the rear ground floor room.

4. 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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Plan 2019 according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

Accordingly, the latest NPPF and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework

Reading Borough Local Plan 2019

Policies:

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CC7 Design and the Public Realm
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
H5 Standards for New Housing
H7 Protecting the Existing Housing Stock
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

Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Residential Conversions (2023)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (December 2019)

5. APPRAISAL

The main considerations are:

- a) Land Use Principles and Amenity
- b) Amenity
- c) Appearance
- d) Parking, transport matters and Bin Storage

a) Land Use Principles and Amenity

Policy H8 states that proposals to convert buildings for multiple occupation 'will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing.

Additionally, in areas covered by an Article 4 direction that restricts changes of use from Class C3 to Class C4: Planning permission will not normally be granted where the proportion of HMOs (either C4 or sui generis) will result in HMOs representing 25% or more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site.

The site is located within an Article 4 area. Evidence has been submitted to illustrate that there is less than a 25% provision for HMOs within a 50m radius from the centre of the front door of the property, this has also been verified by the Reading HMO team. Although number 6 Crescent Road is registered as an HMO, the impact of proposed neighbouring HMOs is considered acceptable in this instance and the residential character of the area would be retained with no substantial dilution of housing mix.

Adequate room sizes are proposed with access to daylight and sunlight and communal space proposed for up to 6 unrelated occupants sharing amenities. This complies with the Reading conversion policy H8.

The existing building is not listed, nor is the proposal site within a Conservation Area.

Whilst the proposal results in the net loss of one two bedroom dwelling unit, there would be no loss in floorspace, and the number of potential occupiers would be similar to a residential household

and could be controlled. There is a greater need for 3 and 4 bedroom family housing within Reading and a residential property would be retained for potential future use to comply with policy H7 Protecting the existing housing stock. As such, there is no in-principle objection to the proposal of a HMO, subject to all other matters being satisfactory.

b) Amenity

With regards to Policy H8 and the impact on neighbouring amenity, the intensification of residential use, within the site is not considered to harm the amenity of other residential units, with separation between the communal room and neighbouring properties.

Proposals to extend the rear of the property have been considered acceptable under planning application 240277 and the extension would not result in being overbearing, a loss of privacy, a loss of light, or harm to outlook to adjacent residential neighbours.

The Residential Conversions SPD refers to the nationally described space standards (Technical housing standards nationally described space standard', 2015, DCLG) as a useful starting point, and where applications propose to provide reduced standards there must be justification why this is the case. It should be noted, however, that Reading Borough Council has a "*Guide to Amenity Standards applicable to Houses in Multiple Occupation that require a Licence*" (i.e. those for 5 persons or more) which references the standards for HMOs as set out in '*The Licencing of Houses in Multiple (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018*'. Regulation 2 refers to national minimum standards for sleeping accommodation as:

- 6.51 square metres for one person aged 10 years or over;
- 10.5 square metres for two persons aged 10 years or over;

All the bedrooms proposed are considered to meet the size requirements. All of the proposed bedrooms are, therefore, acceptable in terms of size, and occupancy of the HMO will be restricted by condition. The proposed floor plan demonstrates that all habitable rooms will be served by windows, allowing for adequate levels of natural light.

The Council expects any proposals for non self-contained accommodation to be of good standard with an appropriate level of facilities. The Residential Conversions SPD identifies that the amount of communal space that is considered appropriate is for one communal room for every 4-6 bedrooms. The proposed plans illustrate a combined kitchen and communal area which is considered adequate. A condition is recommended to ensure that the communal areas are retained for communal use only. Access to the rear garden is provided through the communal kitchen dining area with a separate private rear access for the rear ground floor bedroom. The development is considered to comply with policy H8 and CC8.

c) Appearance

The proposal does not involve any external alterations to the front of the property and therefore, in terms of appearance, the proposal would maintain the character and appearance of the existing site and surrounding area and comply with policy CC7. A condition for materials as specified is recommended in respect of the rear extension.

d) Parking, transport matters and bin storage

This application is for the change of use of a C3 single dwelling into a C4 4 bedroom HMO. 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. This zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone.

The property is served via an existing vehicle crossing and provides off street parking for one vehicle. In accordance with the Councils current Parking Standards and Design SPD the proposed

4 bedroom HMO would require 0.25 parking spaces per lettable room, equating to 1 space, therefore the current provision would be acceptable for a HMO.

The development site is located close to an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area; Zone 14R. 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 development will not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits which will be covered by condition and an informative applied. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on- street car parking in the area.

This HMO property has provided space for general waste, recycling and a food waste bin and will be able to accommodate a minimum requirements of 1 x 240L general waste bin, 1 x 240L recycling bin and 1 x 23L food waste bin as standard.

Amended plans were submitted to illustrate sufficient provision for cycle storage and waste and recycling bin storage. Subject to conditions, the development is considered in accordance with Policies TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, as outlined by the Transport Development Control Team.

Additional Information on HMO requirements

It is advised that the HMO will need to be free from serious hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), Housing Act 2004, Part 1. An application to the Council is required for an HMO licence when the property is occupied by 5 or more persons as the HMO will be subject to the HMO Mandatory Licensing Scheme and need to comply with the Council's amenity standards for licensable HMOs. It will also be necessary to comply with the LACORS Guide to Fire safety for shared houses/bedsits and with The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006. The property will be required to have a current and satisfactory gas safety certificate if there are gas installations and have a current and satisfactory electrical installation condition report (EICR).

Other issues

Building control approval to be sought and all conversion works are to comply with current Building Regulations.

Tree(s)

There is no tree on the rear boundary fence at the rear of 8 and 10 Crescent Road, which had been removed prior to the planning application submission.

Equality implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation. It is considered that there is no indication or evidence that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular application.

6. CONCLUSION

Whilst some adverse amenity impacts are identified with regards to the intensification of residential use, the situation would be similar to that of the occupation of the extended house, although the number of occupants can be controlled via condition to be no more than 6. The proposal to convert the property into a C4 small HMO is not considered to harm the surrounding area and would continue to support a mixed and balanced community. The proposal would also be acceptable in terms of the effect on the character of the existing building. In overall terms, the planning benefits of the proposals are considered to outweigh any harmful impacts in the final planning balance. Planning permission is therefore recommended subject to conditions. Matters relating to waste storage and collection have been considered so far as they are material. The application is recommended for approval, subject to conditions, as set out in the recommendation below.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Approve

Recommended Conditions:

1. Time Limit Standard
2. Approved Plans
3. Materials
4. HMO Refuse, Recycling and Food Waste (as submitted)
5. HMO Parking Permits (notification to occupants)
6. HMO Parking Permits (notification to LPA)
7. HMO Internal Communal Space to be provided and retained as approved
8. HMO Occupation – maximum 6 occupants at any time
9. Parking
10. Cycle storage

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction
4. Positive & Proactive
5. HMO Management Plan
6. HMO Housing Act
7. Highways
8. Internal sound insulation scheme (between ground and first floors and between bedrooms)
9. Encroachment