

PLANNING STATEMENT

HMO Application

395, London Road, Reading RG1 3PB

Introduction

This statement has been prepared in response to local authority correspondence ref **HMO 763095** and accompanies a full planning application for approval of the change of use of the above property from Class C3 dwelling to a large HMO in the Sui Generis use class.

Context

The houses on London Road are typically large in size but have fallen out of favour with the size of family required to fill them given their limited outside space and their close proximity to a constantly busy road and the resultant parking problems.

There is no parking permit scheme in operation for the property and therefore it is more suited to conversion into flats or HMO's where the occupants are less likely to rely on a car as those with families. Indeed it is considered that only those who do not rely on car transport would consider taking up occupancy. There is easy and frequent access to public transport nearby allowing convenient travel to the town centre, Maidenhead, High Wycombe, Woodley, Wokingham and Bracknell.

The existing property has already been converted to the proposed use as it previously operated as a HMO. It was established as an 8 bedroom HMO until 2018 when the licence was allowed to lapse to allow refurbishments and an extra room in the loft.

This work has now been completed and no further construction work is required to facilitate the conversion. It is now a functioning and complete 9 bed property with communal kitchen and dining areas with shared and private bathroom facilities as shown on the accompanying plans.

Reading Borough Council Local Plan.

Given the distance from the university policy H12 relating to student accommodation has not been considered relevant to this proposal but Policy H8: Residential Conversions is considered below:

Proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats or 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.

Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will only be acceptable where:

- ***The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features; The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;***

The original conversion and the post 2018 dormer extension were carried out without any change to the existing frontage. The only addition to the rear, in the form of a sympathetic dormer ensures that no negative impact on the existing character or amenity of the area has resulted. Given that the property has for some time been a HMO or self contained flats there is no reason to believe that its continued operation will adversely affect the existing community. Indeed its continued operation is conducive to the diversity of the local community and supportive of local businesses.

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;

As stated previously, the property has already operated harmoniously as a HMO with the neighbouring properties in the recent past and the modest increase in accommodation since that licence was allowed to lapse by the property owner means it is not likely that any problematic increase in noise and disturbance is foreseen. During its operation no negative effects were evident through increased activity or a problematic increase in refuse or recycling were noted.

There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;

As shown on the accompanying drawings. The room layout is appropriately and naturally arranged throughout the property with comfortable accommodation provided for each resident in terms of both private and shared space.

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

There are refuse and recycling bins located in the front garden in line with the local services and the other properties on London Road. There is ample and secure space for cycle storage in the rear garden.

The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.

Please refer to the accompanying plans that demonstrate the level of accommodation provided. All rooms including those within the loft space have sufficient headroom due to traditional high ceilings to the original property and the addition of the dormer loft conversion.

Additionally, in the case of sui generis houses in multiple occupation (HMOs): The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross; There is sufficient communal space.

The gross floor area is approximately 180m² with a communal dining area and kitchen facilities as well as communal external amenity spaces in the front and rear gardens.

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 property is not in an area covered by an Article 4 direction and its previously approved operation should mean that the % threshold test is not triggered.

Conclusion

Given the previous licence approval and successful operation of the HMO in the recent past along with the appropriate accommodation levels demonstrated on the attached plans it is respectfully requested that planning permission is given to allow for the appropriate licensing to be agreed and the HMO to resume operation.