

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands

App Ref: 231844/FUL

Address: 99 London Road, Reading, RG1 5BY

Proposals: Conversion of building to consist of 4no. 1-bedroom flats (C3 Class), ground floor office (Class E), and 2 short term let units (C1 Class). Alterations to roof including 2x gables to east elevations and 2x dormers on west elevation. Rear ground and first floor extensions, external door and window alterations.

Case Officer: Marcie Rejwerska

Date received (valid from): 12 January 2024
(EOT)

Target Decision date: 11 November 2024

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal site consists of a three-storey terraced building on the corner of London Road and Fatherson Road. The proposal site is located on a busy highway with the surrounding area considered a mix of residential uses and commercial/business uses. The character and appearance of the surrounding area is considered mixed with largely two and three storey development, most of which is Victorian or mid to late twentieth century. The property is currently made up of an office (Class E) on the ground floor, two self-contained flats across the ground floor, and 4 bedsit rooms above.



Image taken on 17/11/2022

99 London Road is located within the Air Quality Management Area, and the Green Network. 95 and 97 London Road directly to the west of the proposal site are Grade II Listed Buildings.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Planning permission is sought for ground floor, first floor and roof extensions to facilitate:

- the enlargement of the existing office on the ground floor

- enlargement of the existing 2x flats on the ground floor
- creation of 2x new self-contained flats on the first floor
- creation of 2x apart-hotel units on the second floor

The proposal includes new fenestration and alterations to access throughout.

Plans considered:

Planning Design and Access Statement, dated 5 December 2023, received 12 January 2024

9132-100 - Location Plan, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-101 - Existing and Proposed Block Plan, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-105 - Existing Elevations, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-104 - Existing Roof Plan and Perspectives, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-102 - Existing Site Plan, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-103 Rev. 01 - Existing Ground, First and Loft Floor Plans, dated 19 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-118 Rev. 05 - Proposed Bin Storage, dated 25 March 2024, received 25 March 2024

9132-114 - Comparison Renders, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-113 - Comparison Renders, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-112 - Comparison Renders, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-108 - Proposed Roof Plan & Perspectives, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-107 - Proposed Ground Floor First & Loft Floor Plans, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-111 - Existing & Proposed Sections, dated 5 December 2023, received 8 January 2024

9132-109 Rev. 02 - Proposed Elevations, dated 23 April 2024, received 23 April 2024

Construction Method Statement, dated 22 February 2024, received 3 July 2024

9132-106 Proposed Site Plan, dated 27 June 2024, received 3 July 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

99 London Road

992408/FUL - Conversion of bedsits and offices to 6 self contained flats - Application withdrawn

172286/CLE - Used as a 1 bedroom flat for over 10 years - Certificate granted

172285/CLE - Used as a studio flat for over 10 years - Certificate granted

221022/FUL - Conversion of building to consist of five self-contained flats (C3 Use Class), and one Class E (Office) unit to the ground floor. Ground floor and first floor rear extensions, dormer extensions, rooflights and alterations to fenestration. - Application permitted

97 London Road

220438/APC - Application for approval of details reserved by conditions 3 (materials), 4 (CMS), 5 (landscaping), 6 (biodiversity), 8 (access), 9 (cycle store), 10 (refuse and recycling), 11 (full postal address), 13 (noise), 16 (garden area), 17 (sustainability) of application 201157. - Split Decision on 05/09/2023

201157/FUL - Erection of two storey dwelling (Class C3) and associated works. - Application Permitted on 10/03/2022

181373/FUL - Erection of 3 storey detached building, comprising 2x1 bed flats and 2x2 bed flats, with associated hard and soft landscaping - Application Refused on 12/10/2018. Appeal Dismissed on 25/09/2019

4. CONSULTATIONS

Non-statutory:

RBC Transport - No objections to amended plans.

RBC Waste Operations - No objections to revised refuse storage plans.

RBC Natural Environment - In conclusion, there are no objections to this application in terms of trees. Please add condition L1 to secure details for the proposed new hedge planting (and new tree if deemed feasible) on the frontage.

RBC Ecology - No objections subject to conditions.

RBC Environmental Protection - No comments to make.

RBC Conservation Officer - Architectural details should be simplified on the west elevation for this to read as the side elevation, not as a secondary front elevation.

Public:

The following addresses were consulted by letter.

101 London Road, The Studio, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5BY
22 Fatherson Road, Reading, Berks, Rg1 4pl, Uk
Flat 1, 99 London Road, Reading, RG1 5BY
17 Fatherson Road, Reading, RG1 4PL
97 London Road, Reading, RG1 5BY
Flat 2, 99 London Road, Reading, RG1 5BY
Basement Flat, 97 London Road, Reading, RG1 5BY
Maisonette, 99 London Road, Reading, RG1 5BY

No letters of representation received.

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
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN15: AIR QUALITY
H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING
H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING
H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING
H7: PROTECTING THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK
H9: HOUSE EXTENSIONS AND ANCILLARY ACCOMMODATION
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
RL1: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES
RL3: VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF SMALLER CENTRES
RL5: IMPACT OF MAIN TOWN CENTRE USES
OU5: SHOPFRONTS AND CASH MACHINES

SPD

Affordable Housing (2021)
Design Guide to Shopfronts (2022)
Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Planning Obligations Under S106 (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction (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.

APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- I. Land use principles
- II. Character and design
- III. Standards for new housing
- IV. Residential amenity
- V. Transport and parking
- VI. Other matters

I. Land use principles

The existing building at 99 London Road consists of an office use and two self-contained flats (confirmed via Certificate of Lawfulness (Existing) applications) at ground floor level, with a four bed across the first and second floors. The existing building is not listed, nor is the proposal site within a Conservation Area.

The proposed extensions are either to existing residential flats, or extensions to facilitate the creation of new flats. The mixed use of office and residential for the building is to be retained, with the addition of two short-term let units (C1 class) within the new loft. The short-term let units are described as serviced apartments. The office use on the ground floor will be to support the function of the serviced apartments on the second floor.

Policy CR6 (Living in Central Reading) states “Where proposals for serviced apartments and apart-hotels fall outside the C3 use class, they will be located within the Central Core. Such proposals will not be permitted unless the duration of occupation of residents is restricted, to ensure the units are used on a short stay basis and not as residential flats, and information monitoring the implementation of this restriction is regularly supplied.”

Although located outside of the central core, there are no objections to creation of C1 units within this location which is close to the central core and well connected through existing public transport links. The short-term let nature is proposed to be considered through a legal agreement to require occupiers to not occupy the premises for longer than 3 consecutive months.

In conclusion, there is no in-principle objection to the proposed extensions and conversion to self-contained flats and short-term units, subject to all other matters (as discussed below) being satisfactory.

II. Character and design

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

The proposed plans were previously approved under planning application ref. 221022. Minor changes were requested to the architectural detail on the east elevation to simplify the design following feedback from the Conservation Officer.

Overall, the proposed extensions, similarly to the previously granted permission, improve the living conditions within this property and are considered acceptable in terms of scale and design.

III. Standards for new housing

As this application seeks a replacement dwelling, policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan is applicable.

Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires that development proposal incorporate sustainable design practices to take account of climate change. Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) requires that all new housing is be built to the higher level of water efficiency standards under Building Regulations and achieves at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rates above the Building Regulations standards and details of this in the form of design and construction stage SAP reviews can be secured by way of conditions.

The proposed residential units meet the minimum space standards, measuring as follows;

- Flat 01: One bed (38.7m²)

- Flat 02: One bed (38.5m²)
- Flat 03: One bed (49.7m²)
- Flat 04: One bed (37.5m²)

The two C1 class units within the loft are below minimum space standards for a studio. However, this is considered acceptable in this case as the units will not provide any long term accommodation. The legal obligations relating to short term use of the units is also therefore considered necessary as the units are not suitable as permanent, long term residences.

IV. Residential amenity

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC8, 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:

- Privacy and overlooking
- Access to sunlight and daylight
- Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development
- Harm to outlook

The proposed flats are located along a busy highway that links the centre of Reading to the east of Reading. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the existing use of 99 London Road is a mix of residential and office. The extensions to the existing ground floor flats are considered acceptable as they increase the gross internal area of both existing 1-bed flats to above the existing substandard condition. All of the residential units are considered to allow for appropriate levels of natural light and outlook to habitable rooms. It is not considered that the C1 class use within the second floor will cause any additional or unreasonable disturbance to the residential units on the first floor.

With regards to impact on neighbouring amenity, the intensification of residential uses within the site will not harm the running of nearby businesses and commercial units along London Road. The development will not result in a loss of privacy, light or harm the outlook to nearby businesses and residents. The development will also not lead to harm for future occupants of the approved dwelling to the rear of 99 London Road (as approved under application 201157).

The proposed flats are not considered to harm the living conditions to neighbouring properties or the surrounding area. The alterations of the existing retail units will also not harm the existing situation to the surrounding area in terms of residential amenity. Therefore, the proposed development is considered in accordance with policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space, which states that:

- Usable outdoor space for houses should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling to which it relates.

Small gardens are proposed for Flats 1 and 2 only. The proposal site is located close to Palmer Park to the east of the proposal site, and Eldon Square to the west. The development has also secured suitable provision for bike storage and bin storage. The location of the development also benefits from being close to local amenities and conveniences. Therefore, on balance, the lack of private amenity space to the proposed flat is not considered harmful enough to warrant a recommendation of refusal for this application on this basis.

V. Transport and parking

The forecourt of the property consists of a gravel driveway, accessed from Fatherson Road. London Road has parking restrictions and Fatherson Road is a resident parking permit road. The proposed forecourt can accommodate 3 off road parking spaces, which are to be allocated as follows;

- 1 parking space for Class E (office) use
- 2 parking spaces for Class C1 (short term let serviced apartments) use

As such, the four residential units will have no allocated parking, and will not be entitled to parking permits on neighbouring roads, such as Fatherson Road. Due to the location of the site within walking distance of the central core and close to public transport links, this is considered acceptable in this case.

One electric vehicle charger is proposed on site, and covered bin storage is proposed at the front of the plot, which improves the current arrangement of bins stored on the public footpath. Cycle storage is proposed within the property which is considered acceptable.

VI. Other matters

In accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; “Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading:

- (...) on sites of 1 - 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.”

The applicant has agreed to enter into a legal agreement to secure a financial contribution towards Affordable Housing. The Affordable Housing contribution is required for two flats proposed to the first floor, as these are only achievable through extensions to the existing building. The existence of the two 1-bed flats to the ground floor have been confirmed through Certificate of Lawfulness (Existing) applications (see section 3 of this report for details). Officers are content that this development proposes extensions to existing ground floor flats, rather than the creation of two self-contained flats to the ground floor, therefore not triggering a requirement for a financial contribution towards affordable housing.

A Section 106 Legal Agreement has been drawn up, which secures a financial contribution of £15,000.00 for the purposes of providing affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough. The figure has been calculated based on the valuations of the existing dwelling and the proposed additional dwelling from two Estate Agents. As per Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD (2021); for sites of 1-4 dwellings, where the contribution required by policy H3 is 10%, this will equate to 5% of GDV of the development.

This is considered acceptable and complies with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD (2021).

The Section 106 Legal Agreement also includes clauses in relation to the use of the short-term let units on the second floor and the terms read as follows;

- No C1 apartment shall be used or occupied as a residential dwelling or dwellinghouse (C3 Use)
- Not to be let or licenced for occupation or permit or suffer occupation of any of the C1 units for a continuous period of more than 5 months to the same occupier or occupiers

- Other than those customers staying in accordance with the above, not to let or licence for occupation or permit or suffer occupation of any C1 unit for a continuous period for more than 5 months to the same customer or customers
- Not to require customers of any C1 unit to agree to any minimum period of occupation (of whatever duration)

Conclusion

The proposed development has been assessed in line with the adopted policies as outlined above and is considered to be in accordance with those policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION

Subject to the following conditions:

1. Time limit standard
2. Approved plans
3. Materials to match
4. Construction method statement as specified
5. SAP Report (Design stage) to be approved
6. SAP Report (As built stage) to be approved
7. Landscaping to be submitted
8. Cycle parking as specified
9. Refuse and recycling as specified
10. Vehicle parking as specified
11. Vehicle parking permits 1
12. Vehicle parking permits 2
13. Hours of construction
14. No bonfires