

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/24/1019 Householder planning permission

Address: 9 ERLEIGH ROAD, READING, RG1 5LR

Proposal: Alterations to front garden to form off-street parking for one vehicle, including forming new crossover and associated works.

Applicant: Mr Ghalib Hussain

Received date: 2024-08-07

Target Decision date: 2025-01-07(EXT)

Case Officer: Huimin Chen

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal site is a three-storey semi-detached dwelling located on Erleigh Road, Redlands Ward. It is being used as semi-independent living accommodation for young people aged 16 to 18. The surrounding area is considered predominantly residential on the north side of Erleigh Road, with Reading School playing fields located directly opposite of the proposal site. Royal Berkshire Hospital is located 150 west of the proposal site.

The proposal site is located within the Alexandra Road Conservation Area, with the dwelling identified as a Building of Townscape Merit in the Alexandra Road Conservation Area Appraisal. Permitted development rights regarding C3 to HMO has been withdrawn by Article 4.



Fig 1. 9 Erleigh Road. Site photo taken on 29/10/2024.



Fig 2. 9 Erleigh Road. Site photo taken on 29/10/2024.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal, which is a resubmission of application number 240206, consists of alterations to the front garden to form off-street parking for one vehicle, including forming a new crossover and associated works.

According to the confirmation from the agent and applicant, the property will house no more than six residents, and 24-hour on-site care will be provided for the young residents aged 16 to 18, all of whom will live together as a single household. Therefore, the applicant and agent state that it would be classified as C3(b) use. The proposal will primarily provide a parking space for third-party visitors, such as social workers, professionals, or emergency services, to improve the accessibility of the property.

Further to the communications with the agent, the following plans/documents were considered:

- Ecological statement
- Biodiversity survey and report
- BNG Metric

- Planning statement
- Tree survey: BS 5837 AIA AMS, ref: 06455/2024
- Liberty supported living draft letter
Received on 7/8/2024.
- Additional supporting letter from 'Liberty Supported Living', dated 10/5/2024
- BS: 5837 Tree protection plan, dated June 2024
Received on 25/8/2024.
- Drawing No: 1358/3/h – Location & Block plan received on 1/10/2024.
- Further supporting information/documents provided by the applicant regarding the use of the property, received on 17/10/2024.
- Heritage statement, dated 30/10/2024, received on 31/10/2024.
- Drawing No. 1358/20/a – Elevation site plan, received on 17/12/2024.

Relevant planning history:

- 240206/HOU - Alterations to front garden to form off-street parking, including forming new crossover and associated works. – Refused on 19/4/2024.
- 231624/HOU - Alterations to front garden to form off-street parking, including forming new crossover and associated works. – Refused on 12/1/2024.
- 221741/FUL - Change of use from C3 single family dwellinghouse to six bedroom HMO (C4 Use Class) – Refused on 3/2/2024.

3. CONSULTATIONS

3.1 Neighbour consultations

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- 8 Denmark Road, READING, RG1 5PA
- 13 Erleigh Road, READING, RG1 5LR
- 11 Erleigh Road, READING, RG1 5LR
- Flat 1, 7 Erleigh Road, READING, RG1 5LR
- Flat 2, 7 Erleigh Road, READING, RG1 5LR
- Flat 3, 7 Erleigh Road, READING, RG1 5LR

One letter of representation has been received as follows: 1A Erleigh Road

'The only comments I would make is that a viewing of the latest plan indicates the space for the parking of four vehicles, when the previous refused application showed slightly less parking space. The question is what has materially changed with this further application? I also find it difficult to believe that the intention is to only park one car. Experience tells us that parking expands into the space available.'

Please refer to the appraisal section for the officer's response to the comments above.

3.2 Internal consultees

Reading Borough Council, Transport – Response received on 25/9/2024

There have been two previous applications on this site 231624 and 240206.

As previously advised the introduction of the dropped crossing will result in the loss of 1 space within the permit bay. Transport would not support a formal break in the residential/shared parking bays fronting the development site unless protection markers were in place; The width of the access for a single dwelling should not exceed 3m and matching access protection marker would be required.

Highways have confirmed (240206) the proposed relocation of the lamp column is acceptable. All associated relocation costs will be met by the applicant and will require the appropriate licences to be obtained from Highways.

As previously advised for application 240206 there would be no Transport objections to the introduction of a vehicle crossing for a single dwelling, however there is a supporting letter submitted with this application from Liberty Supported Living, this use would require a different approach with regards to parking requirements, cycle parking etc. Clarification would be required as to what the property is used for, this would include staff numbers etc.

It should be noted that this property is not included in the Councils residential parking permit scheme and would not be eligible to apply for any permits.

Planning Officer Note: *For further details, please refer to the Transport Section under the Appraisal below.*

Reading Borough Council, Conservation – Response received on 3/10/2024.

Relocating the posts would disrupt the functional relationship between the garden gate and the main dwelling, as they are aligned with the entrance door, guiding pedestrians. If the proposal includes for repositioning the posts, it should include a new pedestrian path and a new or reinstated gate, which is currently missing. This would provide some heritage benefit.

The space for car parking appears large for one car. Two cars could easily park there.

It is suggested that a curvy path is included for pedestrians with some green elements or flower beds towards the entrance of the building, which would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Clarification as to why concrete paving is proposed for footpaths and why the footpath does not continue towards the garden gate is needed. It should also be clarified if all people are expected to arrive by car only. There are some inconsistencies in the conservation principles and design approach for the front garden.

Confirmation is needed on whether any alterations are proposed to the side boundaries.

Amendments to the Heritage Statement are needed.

Planning Officer Note: *In conclusion the Conservation Officer considered 'The proposal will be highly acceptable on heritage grounds if it adds some high-quality design elements. Please ask the agent/applicant to create a better layout, which includes a pedestrian pathway from the garden gate to the main entrance of the building, which has some organic shapes and forms. The proposal should add value to the conservation area.'*

Reading Borough Council, Natural Environment – Response received on 4/10/2024.

Highways have confirmed that to extend the existing crossing to No. 11 so that it also serves No. 9 would not involve any work to the existing crossing.

As such, if the officer gets plans to show the new crossing as an extension of the existing one, I've got no objections.

In tree terms, I do not object to the application, subject to conditions: Arboricultural Method Statement (To Be Submitted); to secure development in accordance with the Arboricultural report submitted (and associated Tree Protection Plan), which should both also be listed as approved documents.

The Proposed site plan indicates 'new shrubbery' hence condition (Landscaping Small Scale (To Be Approved)) is required, which would cover hard landscaping too to deal with the final surfacing of the proposed parking spaces.

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.

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'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)

EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)

EN14 (Trees, Hedges and Woodlands)

TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy)

TR3 (Access Traffic and Highway-related Matters)

TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking)

SPD/Other

Alexandra Road Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2005)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2013

5. APPRAISAL

Impacts on the character and appearance of the main house and Conservation Area

Policy H9 states that an extension to a house will be acceptable where it respects the character of the house in terms of scale, location, materials and design and respects the character and pattern of

neighbouring properties and the street as a whole in terms of scale, location, materials and design, and any important existing building line.

Policy CC7 also sets out relevant considerations for design.

Policy EN1 states that development within Conservation Areas will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits.

Policy EN3 requires development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas.

Previous applications at this address were refused under PL/24/0206 and PL/23/1624, because *'the development would result in the loss of the existing front boundary and surviving elements of the original late Victorian iron gate posts/railing standards, together with the loss of the front garden. Additionally, the proposed loss of boundary treatments and the garden, along with the introduction of hard surfacing and vehicles within the space, would result in harm to the character and appearance of the Alexandra Road Conservation Area.'*

Although the proposal under this application would still result in the partial loss of the existing front boundary, original iron railings and front garden, the harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area is now considered relatively limited compared to the previous proposal, as the amended proposal would relocate the existing posts and reduce the proposed car parking space to accommodate only one car. The relocation of the existing posts to either side of the entrance to the pedestrian footpath, to retain their functional relationship with the main front entrance door, respects the original front boundary. Regarding the front garden, it will retain more than half of its current planting area; no changes will be made to the side boundary except for planting, and new shrubbery would be added in front of the house compared to the previous proposal. The TrueGrid porous ground paving or similar grass paving is proposed for the parking area, details would be secured via conditions. All these elements help to soften the impact on the visual amenity of Alexandra Road and minimise the harms. The Conservation Consultee also confirmed that the overall proposal is acceptable following the revised Heritage Statement, clarifications, and all improvements shown on the revised plan (Drawing No. 1358/20/a).

Therefore, the proposal is considered acceptable regarding the character and appearance, in compliance with Policies CC7, EN1, and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Trees

Policy EN14 requires individual trees, groups of trees, hedges and woodlands to be protected from damage or removal where they are of importance, and Reading's vegetation cover will be extended.

The previous proposal included the following reason for refusal:

'the development would have detrimental impact on neighbouring trees including street trees. The development fails to demonstrate suitable root protection to the roots of T001 and T005. T002 overhangs the site above the proposed parking area. This will lead to future pressure to prune the tree to avoid conflict with the parked vehicles. The proposal will negatively impact on green frontages and quality tree specimens within the Alexandra Road Conservation Area with consequent harm to visual amenity and the character and appearance of the conservation area.'

The new proposal would reduce the off-street parking space to one, which would remove the conflict with the tree and hence it would be unlikely that there would be pressure to prune the tree. The proposed

crossover has been revised as requested by the officers and is shown as an extension of the existing one at No. 11; it would not be within any trees canopy or root protection area. More planting space has been provided within the front garden. Therefore, there are no objections on tree grounds, as confirmed by the Natural Environment Consultee. As a result, no risks have been identified in terms of tree, since none would be removed or significantly impacted by the proposal. To control further details of the landscape in front of the house, pre-commencement conditions (Landscaping Small Scale (To Be Approved) and Arboricultural Method Statement (To Be Submitted)) would be included in the decision, which has been agreed upon with the agent.

Transport:

Policy TR3 requires that in determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment. Policy TR5 states that development should provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

Transport sought confirmation as to the use of the property and some evidence was provided during the course of the application setting out that the property is being used as semi-independent living accommodation for young people aged 16 to 18, and no individual tenancies are issued. The young people living at the property do not receive constant care or medical supervision. The property has two staff members on-site to provide 24-hour support. The applicant states that the property is now within use class C3 (b) and occupants live as a single household, although for formal confirmation a Certificate of Lawfulness would need to be submitted and approved. However, on the basis that the property continues to function as a single household. The Transport Officer has confirmed that there are no objections subject to conditions regarding a restriction on the automatic entitlement to parking permits for any existing residential parking permit schemes and future schemes on adjacent and surrounding streets. The agent has been informed that this property is not included in the Council's residential parking permit scheme and would not be eligible to apply for any permits.

Following communication with the agent, revised plan (Drawing No. 1358/20/a – Elevation site plan, received on 17/12/2024) was received showing that the proposed width of the crossover would be 3m.

6. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Recommended Conditions:

Approved Plans

Time Limit

Materials (As Specified)

Landscaping Small Scale (To Be Approved)

Arboricultural Method Statement (To Be Submitted)

Parking Permits