

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/24/0161 Full planning permission

Address: 41 South Street Reading RG1 4QU

Proposal: Extensions to existing 3 storey building in residential flat use (C3) to include a rear extension at lower ground, ground and first floors and upward extension to create a further floor, to create 3x1 bed flats, 1x split level 1x bed flat and 1x 2 bed flat (amended)

Applicant: Mr Tarique Hanif

Received date: 08 February 2024

Target Decision date: 31/1/2025 (Ext)

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is on the northern side of South Street and is currently a 3-storey building comprising 2 x 1bed flats (lower ground and ground floors) and 1x2 bed flat at 1st floor.

There is a small amenity space, bin storage and parking to the rear, accessed from Livery Close.

Due to the levels the front of the site appears as two storeys and the rear of the site is about 1.8m lower than the front.

There is a mix of commercial and residential buildings (some conversions), of varying styles and eras, within the immediate vicinity up to a maximum of 4 storeys.

Immediately adjacent to the east is a grade II listed terrace at 43-49 South Street and the listing is as follows:

SOUTH STREET 1. 5128 Nos 43 to 49 (odd) SU 7273 7/570 II 2. Circa 1852, possibly by J J Cooper. 2 storey and basement terrace with Bath ashlar front and flint with brick dressings and quoins behind. 2 bays each, glazing bar sash windows. Ground floor channelled with band over. Plain fascia to cornice and parapet. Doors altered. Slate roof, No 43 retains fleur-de-lys arrow head rails to basement.

Listing NGR: SU7202573132

To the west is a flat roofed residential block (conversion from offices) which is 4 storeys (as viewed from the rear).

It is within the defined Reading Central Area under Reading Borough Local Plan (Policies CR1-CR10) and within an Air Quality Management Area (Policy EN15).

Site visit photos 23rd February 2024:



Rear from Livery Close (listed terrace to the left)



Front (Google Streetview)

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The amended proposal is for an additional floor (2nd), rear extension at lower ground, ground and first floors and internal reconfiguration and changes to external fenestration and entrances to create a 5 flat scheme comprising:

Lower Ground Floor: 1-bed rear flat – 37sqm GIA; part of split 1 bed flat (LGF & GF) – 36.9sqm GIA in total

Ground Floor: 1 bed rear flat – 41.3sqm GIA; part of split 1 bed flat (LGF & GF) – 37sqm GIA in total

First Floor: 2-bedroom flat – 61sqm GIA

Second Floor: 1-bedroom flat 48.2sqm GIA

The lower ground floor flat would have a small rear garden and behind this there would be another amenity space to be shared by other residents, along with an area for bin storage and cycle storage to the rear facing Livery Close. The access along the side of the building on the eastern side would be retained.

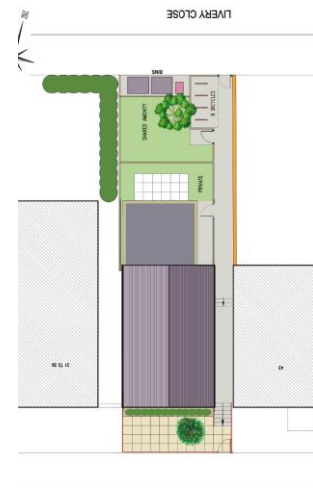
The following final amended drawings and other supported documents were considered and assessed below:

- Drawing no: 230401-1 – Location Plan, received 8th February 2024
- Drawing no: 230401-10 – Existing Floor Plans, received 8th February 2024
- Drawing no: 230401-11 – Existing Front & Rear Elevation, received 8th February 2024
- Drawing no: 230401-3B - Site Plan [Proposed], received 14th June 2024
- Drawing no: 230401-4A Proposed Plans [Lower Ground Floor & Ground Floor Plan], received 14th June 2024
- Drawing no: 230401-5B, Upper Floor Plans [Proposed First Floor Plan & Second Floor Plan] received 14th June 2024
- Front Elevation [Existing and Proposed – no drawing number], received 14th June 2024
- Drawing no: 230401 – 7B - Rear Elevation [Existing and Proposed], received 14th June 2024
- Drawing no: 230401 – 8A – Proposed Side Elevation [east], received 14th June 2024
- Drawing no: 230401 – 9A – Proposed Side Elevation [west], received 14th June 2024

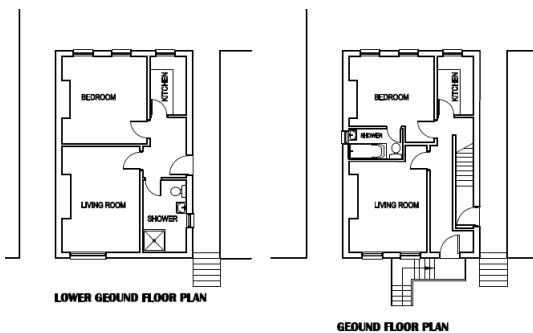
- Coloured Front Elevation [Existing and Proposed - no drawing no], received 14th June 2024
- Air Quality Statement, dated 17/1/24, Issue 1, prepared by Elmstead Energy Assessments and Building Services, received 8th February 2024
- Daylight, Sunlight and Overshadowing Assessment for Surrounding Properties and Proposed Development, dated 17/1/24, Issue 1, prepared by Elmstead Energy Assessments and Building Services, received 8th February 2024
- Heritage Statement, dated January 2024, prepared by Pioneer Designs Ltd, received 8th February 2024
- Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement, dated 12/5/23, prepared by Pioneer Designs Ltd, received 8th February 2024
- Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment, dated 5/12/23, prepared by Nature Bureau, Document ref: 23-20 Report Version 002, received 8th February 2024
- Sustainability Statement, dated 24/5/23, prepared by Pioneer Designs Ltd, received 8th February 2024



*Existing Aerial view
(Google)*



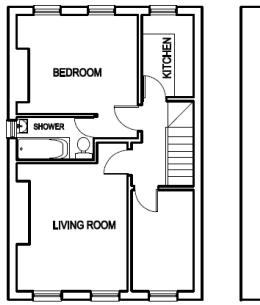
Proposed Block Plan



Existing Lower Ground and Ground Floor

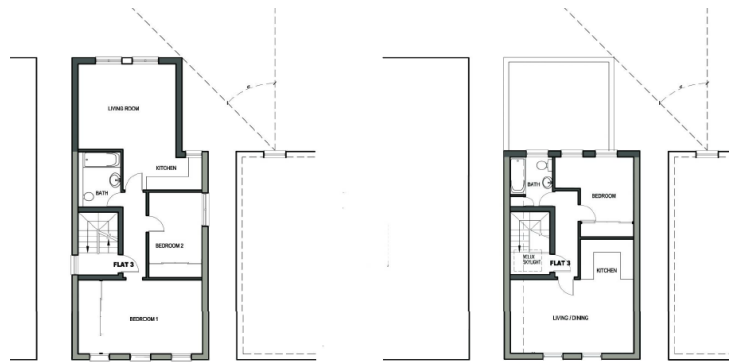


Proposed Lower Ground and Ground Floor



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Existing First Floor Plan



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Proposed First and Second Floors



Existing Front Elevation



Proposed Front Elevation



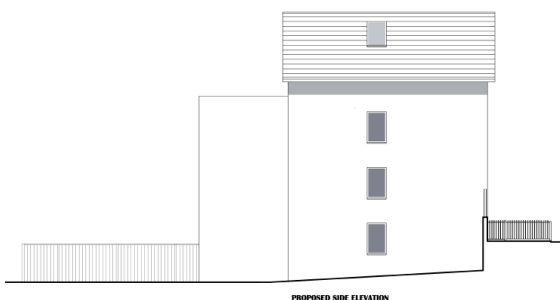
EXISTING REAR ELEVATION

Existing Rear Elevation



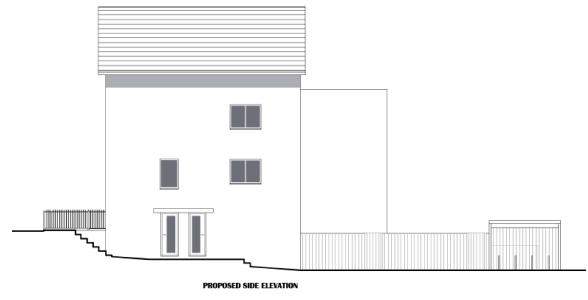
PROPOSED REAR ELEVATION

Proposed Rear Elevation



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION

Proposed Side Elevation (West)



PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION

Proposed Side Elevation (East)

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

99/00776/FUL (PL/99/1719 – New system ref) - Change of use on ground and first floors from offices to two residential flats, (office use retained on lower ground floor) – Approved 28/1/2000

07/0113/FUL (PL/07/1440 – New system ref) – Change of use of lower ground floor from offices (B1) to residential (C3) – Approved 3/8/2009

09/01638/FUL (PL/09/1042 - New system ref) – Discharge of conditions 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10 of planning consent 07/0113/FUL – Discharged 5/5/2010

230753/FUL – Single storey rear extension to lower ground floor, changing existing pitched roof to a mansard roof to create 2nd floor, rear extension to ground 1st and 2nd floors, remodelling the internal layouts to create 1x 1bed and 5 studio flats – Closed 16/1/2024

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- Flats 1-3 (all) 41 South Street
- 43-49 (odd) South Street
- Flats 1-7 (all), Sterling House, 31-39 South Street
- Flats 1-5 (all), 42 Queens Road
- 44 Queens Road
- 31 The Grove

Letters of representation have been received as follows:

41 The Grove
43 South Street

The objections are summarised as follows:

- Detrimental change to a heritage building.
- Impact on traffic and parking including Livery Close, a private road.
- Impact on listed buildings from the scale and proximity of the development.
- Overdevelopment and density of housing.
- Overlooking and loss of privacy to rear garden of no.43.
- Loss of daylight and sunlight to the rear garden of no. 43.
- Impact on structural integrity of no. 43.
- Drainage systems were not designed considering future property development and the increased load from the proposed development.

Conservation

Discussion took place with the Conservation Officer who had no objection to the final amended scheme.

Ecology

The original comments were as follows: The application site comprises a detached three storey building in central Reading. It is proposed to convert the building into six flats, by the

addition of an extra storey to the building (through the changing of the roof style), and the addition of ground and first floor extensions to the rear of the building.

The bat survey report (Naturebureau, December 2023) concludes that as the building *“presents with one or more features suitable for a small number of roosting crevice-dwelling bats, which could be used opportunistically 41 South Street is deemed to offer ‘low’ bat roosting potential.”*

The report then states that works to the building can be undertaken out under a precautionary method of working as per section 5.2.44 of the Bat Conservation Trust’s Bat Survey Guidelines.

Section 5.2.44 reads:

*“ If the structure has been classified as having low suitability for bats (see Table 4.1), an ecologist should make a professional judgement on how to proceed based on all of the evidence available and the balance of probabilities. Thought processes and decision making should be adequately recorded as a paper trail. **If all areas (including voids, cracks and crevices) of a structure have been inspected and no evidence found (and is unlikely to have been removed by weather or cleaning or be hidden), then further surveys are not appropriate.** If complete inspection is not possible then proportionality must be considered. A single survey during the summer months may be adequate to ensure nothing obvious has been missed and/or precautionary measures could be applied during works. This is likely to be a more proportionate approach than carrying out multiple surveys.”*

However, it would appear that an inspection of the potential bat roosting features has not been carried out. As such, and in the absence of this information, the proposals would not comply with Paragraph 99 of the government Circular 06/05: (referred to in the NPPF) which reads:

“It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. The need to ensure ecological surveys are carried out should therefore only be left to coverage under planning conditions in exceptional circumstances, with the result that the surveys are carried out after planning permission has been granted.”

It is therefore not known if the site hosts bats and if so, how they will be affected by the proposals. As such, unless there are ‘exceptional circumstances’, the development would not comply with the above and the application could not be determined until the survey has been completed.

The Bat Conservation Trust’s Bat Survey Guidelines state that to determine the presence or absence of bats where the building has been assessed as having “low” suitability for use by roosting bats (as is the case here) one dusk emergence survey needs to be carried out. The survey needs to be carried out in the optimum period of May to August (inclusive).

The results of the survey should be provided prior to the determination of the application, or the application would need to be refused on the grounds that insufficient information has been provided for the council to determine the likely impact of the proposals upon bats, which are a protected species and material consideration in the planning process.

The application site has potential to host roosting bats and further survey from May 2024 would need to be undertaken to determine the presence/absence roosting bats. Alternatively the applicant will need to provide evidence that the potential roosting features identified in the bat survey report have been fully inspected (for example by inspecting the potential roost features from an elevated platform) which may negate the need to carry out a dusk survey in May.

Planning Officer Note: The applicant submitted a further Bat Survey Report (Nature Bureau, November 2024) and this concludes that the risks of bats being affected by the proposal is minimal. RBC Ecology confirmed that there are no objections subject to an informative: *Should any bats or evidence of bats be found prior to or during the development, all works must stop immediately and an ecological consultant contacted for further advice before works can proceed. All contractors working on site should be made aware of the advice and provided with the contact details of a relevant ecological consultant.*

Transport

The comments for the original submission were as follows: Single-storey rear extension to lower ground floor, changing existing Pitched roof to a mansard roof, Partial rear extension to ground and 1st floors to create 1x 1-bed and 5x studio flats.

Application seeks alterations to the existing building to increase the number of residential units from 3 to 6 x 1 bedroom flats.

The site is located within Zone 2, the primary core area but on the periphery of the central core area which lies at the heart of Reading Borough. This zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone.

It would appear that no on-site parking is to be provided for any of the units, records indicate that 3 parking spaces were previously provided and agreed (Discharge of conditions 3 of planning consent 07/01113/FUL).

Given this application is for the redevelopment of the site, the close proximity to the town centre, good transport links and the extensive parking restrictions in place preventing unauthorised parking, a car free development can be accepted in this instance.

The applicant makes reference to on street parking provision which is available on South Street and suggests residents may wish to apply for a permit from the Council. As advised for the previous application occupants of the units will not be eligible to apply for resident or visitor permits.

The Council's residential parking scheme operates in the area, any additional parking demand created by this development should not be accommodated on the surrounding roads where there is significant demand for on-street parking, therefore, if this application is approved the parking conditions and informative will be applied to prevent any future occupants of the units from obtaining resident or visitor parking permits to protect the amenities of the existing residents in the neighbourhood.

Cycle storage is provided at the rear of the site accessed via Livery Close in an enclosed storage unit, provision is deemed acceptable.

Bin storage should not be located further than 10m from the access point of the site to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods and should comply with Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway. A collection point has been illustrated located at the rear of the site, this area is accessed via Livery Close. It is recommended that the Council's Waste and Recycling team be consulted to ensure the correct type and capacity of bins are provided and they agree to the access arrangements.

Given the site's location a CMS will be required.

Suggested conditions and informatives: CMS to be submitted, cycle parking as specified, refuse and recycling as specified, no entitlement to parking permits. Informatives – works to highways and parking permits.

Waste

It looks as if there should be sufficient space. A development of 5 flats requires 2x 360L general waste bins; 1x 1100L recycling bin; and 1X 180L food waste. It is recommended that the bin be secured with a coded lock only accessible to residents.

Discussions with the agent (with reference to earlier plan versions)

2/3/24 - Email from Planning Officer to agent – Comments provided are summarised as follows:

- Principle of extending upwards acceptable subject to addressing a number of matters.
- Mansard type roof form unacceptable because it would not positively contribute to the overall character and appearance of the area, and particularly the adjacent listed terrace.



- Flat roof to the rear extension would be preferable to a mono-pitch as proposed.
- Roof plan required.
- Rear elevation needs to be simplified with the removal of the balconies and the provision of a shared amenity space along with a small private amenity space to serve the lower ground floor flat.
- Fenestration detail should retain a more vertical emphasis more akin to the existing.
- Lower ground floor extension should be no deeper than no. 39.
- The ground, first and second floor extensions should be in line with the lower ground floor and to ensure no breach of 45 degree line.
- Change the mix and number of units to include a 2 bed and reduce the number of units to 5.
- Affordable Housing Policy H3 needs to be met through a financial contribution to enable 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough based on the average of GDVs of 2-3 independent valuations and a S106 legal agreement would be required.

13/3/24 - Email from agent to Planning Officer - Amended plans and information, summarised as follows:

- Amended mansard roof reducing the pitch and the shape:



- Lower ground floor extension roof change to flat roof. Roof plan shown on site plan.
- Rear balconies removed and a shared amenity space added.
- The rear extension of ground, first and second floors are now extended further to match the rear of No. 39 South Street. The additional space gained has resulted in an increase in the internal floor area.
- The number of units reduced from 6 to 5 to include one duplex studio flat at the lower ground and ground levels with a gross internal area of 37sq.m, two one-bedroom flats at the lower ground and ground floors with a gross internal areas of 45sq.m and two two-bedroom flats at the first and second floors with a gross internal area of 64.7sq.m.
- Confirmation that a contribution towards AH will be made in accordance with Policy H3 and that a S106 will be entered into.

25/4/24 – Email from Planning Officer to agent – summary of comments as follows:

- Transport confirmation that a no-car scheme would be acceptable subject to conditions.
- Ecology require a further survey or evidence that potential roosting features have been fully inspected, which may negate the need for a dusk survey.
- Amended roof form is still unacceptable. It would create an awkward form, which would not positively contribute to the overall streetscene nor the character and appearance of the property and area. The pitched roofs might be less intrusive in terms of overall bulk, but not overall appearance. It is not considered that having the additional height next to no. 43, at the existing depth of the building, would have a detrimental effect on no.43 in itself.
- The flat roof to the lower ground floor extension is an improvement, but the lower ground floor should not extend past the rear building line of no. 39 and it would make a simpler build if all floors were at the same rear plane.
- Removal of the balconies and flat roof to the lower ground floor extension have simplified the rear elevation and this is an improvement, however, the adjustments to the building line projection at all levels now appear too dominant, notwithstanding it does miss the 45 degree line.
- The depth of the extension closest to the listed terrace and the overall built form need to be minimised as far as possible.
- The second floor would be too overbearing and needs to be set back; The top floor space at full width over the other floors (extract below) is not acceptable. the rear elevation, as it projects past the rear elevation of no.43, especially at that top level, creates an unacceptable arrangement.
- You will need to consider an appropriate roof form between the first and second floors.
- The amended windows have a more vertical emphasis, which is an improvement.

- The rear amenity space arrangement is improved, but it is suggested that the private amenity space for the LG flat with a slightly larger area for the shared amenity space for the remaining flats.
- In order to achieve the proposed amendments, the second floor flat would need to be reduced a one bed.

7/5/24 – Email from agent to Planning Officer – summary of comments as follows:

- Gable end roof form reintroduced with elevation of the eaves by ca 400mm to accommodate the second floor flat within the loft space.
- Lower ground floor rear extension removed.
- Second floor projection removed.
- Rear amenity amended.

17/5/24 – Email from Planning Officer to agent – summary of comments as follows:

- I consider that raising the overall height of the building, but keeping the gable form and pitched roof is better.
- Bringing the rear building line of the extension back, to be in line with no. 39, is positive. However, you have retained the extended form of all floors closest to no. 43 and the listed terrace. It is considered that there would be some harm to the significance of the listed terrace with the built form as it is currently shown and the overall the extension would appear as an overbearing and dominant addition. This would need to be pulled back as previously suggested even if this means that a greater mix of units would not be achieved, as previously advised.

12/6/24 – Email from Planning Officer to agent:

- Advised that to achieve a supportable scheme the second-floor rear extension would need to be removed.

This final amendment was made, and revised plans were submitted on 14/6/24 (as listed above).

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) which states at Paragraph 11 *“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”*.

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework 2023
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Section 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
Section 8 - Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities
Section 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
Section 11 – Making Effective Use of Land
Section 12 – Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places
Section 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change
Section 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
Section 16 - Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

National Planning Policy Guidance – 2014 onwards

Adopted Reading Borough Local Plan – November 2019

Policy CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
Policy CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change
Policy CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage
Policy CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm
Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
Policy CC9: Securing Infrastructure
Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
Policy EN6: New Development in a Historic Context
Policy EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network
Policy EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland
Policy EN15: Air Quality
Policy EN16: Pollution and Water Resources
Policy EN18: Flooding and Drainage
Policy H1: Provision of Housing
Policy H2: Density and Mix
Policy H3: Affordable Housing
Policy H5: Standards for New Housing
Policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
Policy TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy
Policy TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
Policy TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities
Policy TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging
Policy CR2: Design in Central Reading
Policy CR6: Living in Central Reading

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
Revised SPD on Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2019)
Affordable Housing (2023)

Other Relevant Documents

National Design Guide (MHCLG, October 2019)
Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment
Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (Historic England, 2015)

6. APPRAISAL

The main issues to be considered are:

- a) Land Use Considerations
- b) Design and Character and Impact on the Historic Environment
- c) Housing Density and Mix
- d) Amenity
- e) Transport Matters
- f) Sustainability
- g) Trees, Landscaping & Ecology
- h) Other
- i) S106 (Affordable Housing) & Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

a) Land Use Considerations

Policy CC1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP) requires a positive approach to development proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which lies at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The proposal for new housing would be an acceptable **use** and would contribute to meeting the need for homes in accordance with Para. 123 of the NPPF, and Policy H1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (RBLP).

Any scheme would also need to meet other policy requirements, as set out below, and in particular be an acceptable design within the setting of a listed building.

b) Design and Character and Impact on the Historic Environment

Paragraph 131 of The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that *“the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”*

The National Design Guidance identifies 10 key components for good design and of particular note is the characteristic of ‘Context’ and it states that *“well designed new development responds positively to the features of the site itself and the surrounding context beyond the site boundary. It should enhance positive qualities and improve negative ones.”*

At the local level RBLP Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm, requires all development to be of a *“high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.”*

Specific to the consideration of the design of proposals within Central Reading is Policy CR2. This identifies a number of attributes that development should demonstrate including:

“....d. The architectural details and materials used in the central area should be high quality and respect the form and quality of the detailing and materials in areas local to the development site...”

With regard to the historic environment the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and a key dimension of this is defined as “...*protecting and enhancing our...historic environment*”. The NPPF Paragraph 206 states: “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.”

Paragraph 208 states that “where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.” Public benefits could be “*anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework..*” (The National Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 020 Reference ID: 18a-020-20190723).

At the local level the Reading Borough Local Plan includes Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment which requires development to ensure that “*Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced.*”

Policy EN6 requires new development to “*make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities...*”

When viewed from the front the existing building is taller than the listed terrace and with a pitched roof with its eaves at roughly the highest part of the listed terrace roof parapet and its ridge at roughly the same height as the adjacent converted office building. The proposal would include a modest increase in the overall height, including a slight increase in the eave’s height, but retaining the same roof pitch and elevational plane. The spacing between the application site and the listed terrace would not change. It is not considered that this increase would be out of scale in terms of the building itself nor the wider area and would not be visually jarring when viewed within the setting of the listed terrace.



The proposal would also introduce a light well for the lower ground floor with an enclosed paved area and some planting. The front door would be relocated to the eastern side of the property and the front staircase would be removed. The enclosed front area would introduce a similar element to that at the adjacent terraces and is considered acceptable.



Existing listed terrace

The proposed material would be retained as a simple render as currently.

To the rear the 4.2m deep extension at lower ground, ground and first floors would be a simple flat roofed form with windows retaining a vertical emphasis. It would have a similar form to rear projections to properties facing Queens Road, with their rear elevations facing Livery Close. It is considered that this would be proportionate to the scale of the building and although would change the level of built form adjacent to the terraces there would be an offset of the rear extension closest to the listed terrace, with the depth of the extension in line with the adjacent converted building.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed extensions to the application site would cause less than substantial harm and a minor impact on the significance of the adjacent listed terrace. This has been weighed against the provision of additional residential units, enhancement to the overall amenity space and appearance to the front. The proposal is considered to accord with Policies EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the NPPF.

c) Housing Density and Mix

Policy H2 identifies that the appropriate density of residential development will be informed by: the character and mix of the area in which it is located; its accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport the need to achieve good quality design; the need to maximise the efficient use of land and the need to minimise environmental impacts include detrimental impacts of adjoining occupiers.

Specifically, to Central Reading, Policy CR6 requires a mix of different unit sizes and ideally 1, 2 and 3 beds.

This is a small-scale proposal which increases the number of units from 3 to 5. The overall density of development is considered appropriate for this central site and the proposal would include 5x1 beds and 1x2 bed, which is considered acceptable when weighed against ensuring that the overall scale of the building would not cause significant harm to the listed building with respect to its setting and amenity issues for neighbouring residents.

d) Amenity

Policy CC8 requires development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of: Privacy and overlooking; Access to sunlight and daylight; Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; Harm to outlook; Noise and disturbance; Artificial lighting; Vibration; Dust and fumes; Smell; Crime and safety.

CR6 ii) Proposals for new residential development within the central area will be required to demonstrate how the air quality implications of residential development, have been considered and if necessary, mitigated.

Policy EN15 states: *Development should have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.*

Effects on Adjoining Residents

Further to concerns raised by Officers and arising from the consultation, regarding the scale and proximity of the proposed extensions, an amended plan was submitted which reduced the extension moving it further from the neighbouring no.43 South Street and removing the second-floor extension. It is considered that the extension would not create an overbearing effect.

The neighbour also raised concern in terms of the overlooking and loss of privacy. There would be a new rear window at second floor level, but this would be at the same plane as the existing windows. It is not considered overall that the proposed windows would create a significantly different effect compared to the existing.

A daylight and sunlight assessment was prepared for the original submission, which had development closer to no.43 and with an extended second floor to the rear. The rear extension is now set off the shared boundary with no. 43 by 2.45m and it would not impinge on the 45- degree line. The Report concluded that there would be no loss of sunlight, a negligible impact on daylight, which would be within BRE Guidelines, and a negligible impact on the amount of overshadowing experienced by the garden area of 43 South Street, also within BRE guidelines.

It is not considered that the extension would create a material overbearing effect and there would be no undue loss of privacy.

Comments received from neighbour consultation included concerns regarding an impact on traffic and parking. It is not considered that a proposal to increase the number of flats by two would generate a substantial increase in traffic and, therefore, it is not considered that this would significantly affect the level of noise and air pollution to such a degree that it would warrant refusal on this basis.

The construction phase of the proposed development would have potential to impact on the amenity of surrounding occupiers. Conditions are included to secure the submission and approval of a construction method statement, control construction hours and no bonfires.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

The submitted daylight and sunlight assessment demonstrates that all of the proposed new habitable rooms would satisfy the BRE daylight requirements.

Policy H5 requires that proposed dwellings meet the nationally described space standards for the type of dwelling, however this policy is specifically for units outside of the central area. Although this is not a policy requirement at this central site, paragraph 4.4.42 of the RBLP recognises that the space standards provide a useful starting point and a good basis for the design of new developments, and the

acceptability of internal space afforded to future occupiers. In this instance the size of the units, as set out above, either meet or are very marginally below national space standards and are, therefore, considered acceptable for this central site.

The internal layout and stacking of the units is considered acceptable and all habitable rooms would have external windows.

H10 deals specifically with private and communal space and states that *“The design of outdoor spaces will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity”*. And *“....flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens”*.

The proposed scheme includes for a small private rear garden for the lower ground floor rear flat, a similar arrangement to the existing, along with a communal garden space for the remaining residents. For this central site this is considered an acceptable approach. The provision of some amenity space has been balanced positively against the loss of 3 car parking spaces.

The scheme is considered to accord with Policies CC8, H5 and H10.

e) Transport Matters

Policy TR1 states that *“All development proposals should make appropriate provision for works and contributions to ensure an adequate level of accessibility and safety by all modes of transport from all parts of a development, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling”*.

Policy TR4 requires developments *“to make full use of opportunities to improve access for cyclists to, from and within the development and to integrate cycling through the provision of new facilities.”*

Cycle storage would be provided to the rear within a locked shed and would comply with the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD.

The proposed scheme would be car-free, which has been considered as acceptable for this central site which is well served by public transport within close proximity and subject to a condition regarding no automatic entitlement to parking permits.

Subject to the above condition and conditions for the submission and approval of a CMS, cycle parking as specified and no entitlement to parking permits the proposal accords with Policies TR1 and TR5.

f) Sustainability

Policy CC2 requires proposals for new development to be designed and have site layouts which *“use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.” Both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater harvesting where systems are energy and cost effective....;*

Other relevant policies are CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

Policy H5 requires that all new build housing integrate additional measures for sustainability including:

“.....b. All new build housing will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3) of the Building Regulations;

d. All other new build housing will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations.”

The submitted Sustainability Statement identifies that construction materials would be from responsible and sustainable sources and will be specified with either an A or A+ rating from the BRE Green Guide for building elements. Where possible, the reuse and recycling of materials from existing buildings should be incorporated.

In terms of new cavity walls, existing cavity walls, flat roof and windows the proposal is to achieve low U-Values.

All north-facing windows are proposed to be triple-glazed and light fixtures installed with LED bulbs. The heating systems will be electric.

Although secured by planning condition, these new requirements would be administered through the Building Regulations, with confirmation of compliance submitted to the LPA to discharge the condition.

g) Trees, Landscaping & Ecology

Trees & Landscaping

Policy EN14 seeks to extend the Borough's vegetation cover and that development should make provision for tree planting, whilst Policy CC7 seeks that proposals should include appropriate landscaping.

This is a compact urban site with little outside space to create any meaningful landscaping. The current site comprises hardstanding to the external areas, which offer no ecological or visual benefit. The proposed scheme will include a small extension to the garden area to the rear, with a tree indicated on the proposed block plan, which would provide some enhancement compared to the existing. The proposed enclosed front area is shown with some shrub planting, which would also improve the visual amenity of the site. This will be secured via condition.

Ecology

Policy EN12 seeks that developments should retain, protect and incorporate features of biodiversity and states that *“development should not result in a net loss of biodiversity and geodiversity, and should provide a net gain for biodiversity wherever possible.”*

The submitted Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report concluded that the application site offers low bat roosting potential and provided some recommendations for precautionary working practices for roof works and recommended scheme for bat bricks, bat tiles and/or boxes. Further to comments from the Ecology Officer, additional survey details were submitted. Subject to an informative regarding if bats are found during development Ecology has confirmed that the scheme is acceptable.

The site would be exempt from meeting the mandatory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), however, the additional planting would result in an enhancement of the biodiversity of the site in accordance with Policy EN12.

i) **S106 & Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

S106 (Affordable Housing)

Policy CC9 (Securing Infrastructure) requires “*infrastructure, services, resources, amenities or other assets lost or impacted upon as a result of the development or made necessary by the development to be provided through direct provision or financial contributions at the appropriate time.*”

Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) requires for this scale of development to provide for an off-site affordable housing contribution equivalent of 10% of the GDV of the development (50/50% split - developer/registered social housing provider).

An Affordable Housing contribution has been secured against the newly created 1 bed flat on the 2nd floor and the 2-bedroom flat on the first floor. The applicant has agreed to full policy compliant provision and the signed S106 legal agreement includes a financial obligation for £19,000, calculated based on two independent valuations of £180,000 and £200,000.

This accords with Policies H3 and CC9 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

(CIL)

The proposal would be a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liable development. The applicant has provided the CIL Additional Information Form. The amount (based on 2024 CIL rate – to 31/12/24) would be estimated to amount to £18,646 (ca104sqm of additional floorspace x £179.29 2024 indexation). An informative is included to advise the applicant of their responsibilities in this respect.

h) **Other**

Bin Storage

An appropriate level of bin storage is identified on the block plan and a condition is included requiring the provision of such as specified. This would accord with Policy CC5.

Neighbour comments

The proposal would include a modest increase to the built form and would include two additional units. It is not considered that any increased load on the drainage system would be so significant as to warrant refusal on this basis.

The impact on structural integrity is not a material planning consideration.

7. CONCLUSION

There would be planning benefits associated with the provision of two additional residential units, a contribution towards affordable housing and some additional soft landscaping to enhance the appearance of the site.

It is considered that there would be a limited minor effect in terms of the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, very limited effects in terms of any overlooking/ perceived loss of privacy and some negligible effect on daylight for the adjoining property and these would be outweighed by the benefits of the scheme, and it is, therefore, recommended for approval.

8. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT subject to conditions and S106 legal agreement:

Recommended Conditions:

- Standard time limit
- Approved plans
- Pre-commencement materials to be submitted
- Construction hours
- Pre-commencement CMS
- No bonfires
- Parking permits x 2
- Cycle parking as submitted prior to occupation
- Pre-occupation refuse and recycling to be submitted
- Pre-occupation landscaping scheme
- No external lighting
- SAP design stage
- SAP final
- Existing walls to be retained to ensure works remain as extensions