



TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

APPEAL UNDER SECTION 78

**APPEAL BY KEEN PARTNERSHIP AGAINST THE DECISION BY READING
BOROUGH COUNCIL TO REFUSE A CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS
FOR EXISTING USE**

FOR

**Certificate of lawfulness for existing use as a self-contained 1 x bed studio flat
for more than four years**

AT

97a YORK ROAD, READING, RG1 8DU

INSPECTORATE REFERENCE: APP/E0345/X/25/3360198

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL REFERENCE:

PL/24/1414

21st April 2025

Planning Section, Directorate for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Reading Borough Council

Civic Offices, Civic Centre

RG1 2LU

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A certificate of lawfulness was refused by Reading Borough Council on the 23rd of January 2025. The reason for refusal was the following the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence or other information that satisfies the Local Planning Authority that the use of the property as an independent C3 dwelling has been ongoing continuously for at least four years.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION & PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 These matters are referenced in the officer report (which was included as part of the Council's questionnaire). In line with section 12.3 of the Planning Inspectorate's Procedure Guide: Planning appeals – England guidance, these are not repeated here.

3.0 LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Annexure 8 "Lawfulness and the Lawful Development Certificate" of Planning Circular 10/97 'Enforcing Planning Control: Legislative Provisions and Procedural Requirements' sets out the procedure for assessing applications for certificates of lawfulness: Section 191(1) of the 1990 Act enables anyone to apply to the LPA for a decision on whether a specified existing use, operation, or failure to comply with a planning condition or limitation, which has already been carried out on land, is lawful for planning purposes.
- 3.2 The onus of proof in a LDC application is firmly on the applicant. Subsection (4) of section 191 provides that if, on an application under the section, the LPA are provided with information satisfying them of the lawfulness, at the time of the application, of the use, operations or other matter described in the application, or that description as modified by the LPA or a description substituted by them (see paragraph 8.35 below), they shall issue a certificate to that effect; and, in any other case, they shall refuse the application'. Para 8.3 states, 'by virtue of section 191 (2), uses and operations are "lawful" if no enforcement action may

be taken against them, and they are not in contravention of any enforcement notice which is in force. And, by virtue of section 191(3), a failure to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted is "lawful" if the time for taking enforcement action in respect of the failure has expired and it does not constitute a contravention of any enforcement notice or breach of condition notice which is in force.'

4.0 Response to Appellant's Statement

- 4.1 The Appellant's statement references the fact that the Local Authority has failed to consider the submitted evidence and misapplies the legal burden of proof. In addition, they put forward that the decision lacks any counterevidence and contradicts established case law and planning appeal precedents. However, they fail to directly reference any within their appeal statement.

5.0 Conclusions.

- 5.1 After consideration of the Appellant's statement, the Council remains of the opinion that, the applicant has not provided sufficient evidence or other information that satisfies the Local Planning Authority that the use of the property as an independent C3 dwelling has been ongoing continuously for at least four years. It follows that there is no justification to grant the certificate of lawfulness applied for by the applicant.
- 5.2 The Inspector is respectfully requested to dismiss the appeal for the reasons set out in this statement.

Appendix 1 – Suggested Conditions

Time Limit

The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this planning permission.

REASON: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) in order to prevent an accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location Plan PL-01
Proposed Site Plan PL-09
Proposed Ground Floor Plan PL-10
Proposed First Floor Plan PL-11
Proposed Second Floor Plan PL-12
Proposed Roof Plan PL-13
Proposed Elevations (Front and Rear) PL-14
Proposed Street Scene PL-15
Proposed Side Elevations Block A PL-17
Proposed Side Elevations Block B PL-18
Proposed Section PL-19
Proposed Overlay Plan PL-20
Received 9th January 2024

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

Materials

No development shall commence beyond foundation level until a schedule the materials, including samples, to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out and thereafter maintained in accordance with the details approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

SAP – Major (Design Stage)

No development shall commence on site until written verification has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority demonstrating that all of the dwellings hereby permitted will achieve a minimum of a 35% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in The Building Regulations for England Approved Document L1A: Conservation of Fuel and Power in New Dwellings (2013 edition), a commitment in writing that a S106 contribution will be made to the Local Authority to account for any remaining emissions, and will be built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36(3),. Such evidence shall be in the form of a 'Design Stage' Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) Assessment, produced by an accredited energy assessor.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with sustainable building standards in accordance with Policy CC2 and H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

SAP – Major (As built)

The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until written verification has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority demonstrating that all of the dwellings hereby permitted have achieved a minimum of a 35% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in The Building Regulations for England Approved Document L1a: Conservation of Fuel and Power in New Dwellings (2013 edition), a S106 contribution has been made to the Local Authority to account for any remaining emissions, and that it has been built to the higher water efficiency standard under Regulation 36 (3). Such evidence shall be in the form of an 'As Built' Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) assessment, produced by an accredited energy assessor.

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with sustainable building standards in accordance with Policy CC2 and H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs)

No development shall commence on site until a Sustainable Drainage Strategy and associated detailed design, management and maintenance plan of surface water drainage for the site using SuDS methods has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include:

- i. a timetable for its implementation, and
- ii. a management and annual maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to reduce the risk of flooding onsite or elsewhere in accordance with Policy EN18 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Landscaping (To be approved)

No development shall commence on site until a comprehensive scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- a) Proposed finished ground and floor levels or contours, means of enclosure (including mammal gaps where appropriate), car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
- b) Hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and other ancillary structures (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc);
- c) Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), tree pit specifications, schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable;
- d) A maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting;
- e) routes and details of proposed and existing functional services above and below ground including foul and surface water drainage, soakaways and SUDs details, power, communications cables and water and gas supply pipelines, including access points;

The approved hard and soft landscaping scheme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required prior to commencement of development because of insufficient information contained within this submission and in the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Boundary Treatments

Prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved, a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of boundary treatment to be erected, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The boundary treatment shall be implanted in accordance with the approved plan before the development is occupied or otherwise in accordance with a timescale agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to protect the privacy of adjoining and future occupiers and in the interests of the visual amenities of the locality and local wildlife in accordance with Policy CC7 and EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation

No development shall commence on site (including demolition or preparatory works) until a Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation (using the Statutory Metric) to demonstrate there will be a net gain in biodiversity on site, and details of a habitat enhancement scheme, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme is to include a programme for implementation and ongoing maintenance. The habitat enhancement scheme shall thereafter be implemented and adhered to in accordance with agreed programme.

REASON: Details are required prior to commencement as insufficient information was submitted with the application and in order to avoid harm to habitats and species whilst securing biodiversity enhancement in the long term. This accords with Paragraph 175 of the NPPF (2019), Policy EN12 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Noise Management

No development shall commence on site until a detailed scheme, informed by an assessment of the current noise environment, for protecting the dwellings from the external noise environment of the area has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme itself shall be designed, specified and constructed so that the sound insulation performance of the structure and the layout of the dwellings are such that the indoor ambient noise levels do not exceed the values detailed in Table 4 of BS 8233:2014. Where opening windows will lead to an internal noise level increase of 5 dBA or greater above BS 8233:2014 recommended internal levels, the scheme shall include provision of alternative mechanical ventilation with minimum performance equivalent to a mechanical heat recovery (MVHR) system with cool air bypass as an alternative means of cooling and ventilation. Noise from the system should not result in BS8233 internal levels being exceeded.

Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved scheme which shall be completed before any part of the accommodation hereby approved is occupied, unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise agrees in writing.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to safeguard the amenity of occupants in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Construction Method Statement

No development shall commence on site, including any works of demolition, until a site specific Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for:

- a) Space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided;
- b) Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- c) The erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site;
- d) Identification of any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction;
- e) Required wheel washing facilities on site;
- f) A scheme for recycling waste resulting from the construction works.
- g) Measures for controlling the use of site lighting whether required for safe working or for security purposes;
- h) Required measures to control the emission of dust, dirt and other airborne pollutants during demolition and construction;
- i) Provisions to be made for the control of noise coming from the site during demolition and construction.

The measures within the approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety in accordance with Policy CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Hours of Construction

No construction, demolition or associated deliveries shall take place outside the hours of 0800hrs to 1800hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 0800hrs to 1300hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In order to protect occupiers of nearby properties from unreasonable disturbance from works connected with implementing this permission in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

No Bonfires

No materials or green waste produced as a result of the clearance of the site, demolition works or construction works associated with the development hereby approved shall be burnt on site.

REASON: In the interests of air quality, the amenity of neighbours, and to promote more sustainable approaches to waste management in accordance with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Contaminated Land Assessment (To Be Submitted)

No development shall commence on site including demolition and any preparatory works until an assessment of the nature and extent of contamination has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This assessment must be undertaken by a competent person, and shall assess any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site. Moreover, it must include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - human health,
 - property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and service lines and pipes,
 - adjoining land,
 - groundwaters and surface waters,
 - ecological systems,
 - archaeological sites and ancient monuments;

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and to ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

Remediation Scheme (To Be Submitted)

No development shall commence on site including demolition and any preparatory works until a detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historical environment has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s), and a timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and to ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

Remediation Scheme (Implement And Verification)

The approved remediation scheme under Condition INSERT shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable of works. A validation report (that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out) shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before construction above foundation level.

REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

Unidentified Contamination

In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development not previously identified, development shall be halted on that part of the site the contamination reported in writing to the Local Planning Authority.

An assessment of the nature and extent of contamination shall be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme, together with a timetable for its implementation, shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority for its written approval.

The measures in the approved remediation scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable. Halted works shall not be re-commenced until the measures identified in the approved remediation scheme have been completed and a validation report has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure the development is suitable for its end use and the wider environment and does not create undue risks to occupiers of the site or surrounding areas in accordance with Policy EN16 of the Reading local Plan 2019.

Vehicle Parking (to be approved)

No development shall commence on site until a plan showing how ten (10) car parking spaces can satisfactorily be provided on site is submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The car parking spaces shall be provided in full accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation and thereafter kept free of obstruction and retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

REASON: To ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities to meet the needs of future occupiers and reduce the likelihood of roadside parking which could be a danger to other road users in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Cycle Parking (to be approved)

No development shall commence on site until a plan showing how twelve (12) cycle parking spaces can satisfactorily be provided on site is submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle parking spaces shall be provided in full accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation and thereafter kept free of obstruction and retained in accordance with the approved details and shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in order to encourage travel by sustainable alternatives to private vehicle in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Refuse And Recycling Collection (To Be Approved)

No development shall commence on site including demolition and any preparatory works until details of how refuse, recycling, and compostable waste collections will be conducted from within the site, including areas for on-site vehicle manoeuvring. A plan, including manoeuvring diagrams shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter refuse collection, servicing and deliveries will be carried out fully in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: In the interests of general amenity, to ensure convenience of arrangements for refuse and recycling storage and collection and to ensure that no obstruction is caused on the adjoining highway, in the interest of highway safety and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Refuse and Recycling Detail (To Be Approved)

Notwithstanding the approved drawings, the development hereby permitted shall not be occupied until details of refuse and recycling storage sufficient for the intended development, including measures for the ongoing cleaning and control of rats, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be fully implemented before first occupation and the areas of land so provided shall not be used for any purposes other than the storage (prior to disposal) or the collection of refuse, recycling, and compostable waste and shall be thereafter retained and maintained as such, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of general amenity, to ensure convenience of arrangements for refuse and recycling storage and collection and to ensure that no obstruction is caused on the adjoining highway, in the interest of highway safety and in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Vehicular Access

No dwelling/building hereby permitted shall be occupied until the vehicle access serving it has been constructed in accordance with the plans hereby approved.

REASON: In the interests of road safety in accordance with Policy TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Access Closure with Reinstatement

The existing accesses to the site shall be stopped up and abandoned immediately after the new access has been brought into use. The footway(s) and verge shall be reinstated in accordance with a subsequent approval by the local highways authority for such works.

REASON: In the interests of road safety and maintenance of the highway in accordance with Policy TR1 and TR3 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Parking Permits 1

No residential unit hereby approved shall be occupied until the Local Planning Authority has been notified in writing of the full postal address of the unit(s) hereby approved. The notification shall be sent to the Local Planning Authority quoting the application reference specified on this Notice.

REASON: In order that the Council can update its records to ensure that parking permits are not automatically issued to the occupiers of the new residential units hereby approved, and thus ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

Parking Permits 2

Prior to any agreement being entered into for a new occupation of, or transfer of any interest in, the residential unit(s) hereby approved, the prospective occupier/transferee shall be informed that there is no automatic entitlement to a car parking permit for any existing residential parking permit schemes and future schemes on adjacent and surrounding streets. All material used for advertising or marketing the residential unit(s) for letting or sale shall make it clear to prospective tenants and occupiers that they will not be automatically entitled to a parking permit, but any application for a parking permit will be considered on its merits.

REASON: In order that the prospective occupiers are made aware of the fact that while they can submit an application they will not be automatically entitled to an on-street car parking permit. In the interests of the proper management of parking, and to ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.

EV Charging Points

No dwelling shall be first occupied until details of an electric vehicle (EV) charging Scheme comprising a layout plan and detailed specification for a minimum of one (1) vehicle parking spaces to be provided with electric vehicle charging points has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

No dwelling shall be first occupied until the Scheme has been fully provided in accordance with the approved details. The spaces shall be maintained for vehicle charging in accordance with the approved Scheme at all times thereafter.

REASON: In the interests of environmentally sustainable transport in accordance with Policy TR3 and TR5 of the Reading Local Plan 2019.