

35 Coley Hill, Reading, RG1 6AE
Proposed House in Multiple Occupancy – Change in Use from a Class C4 HMO
Design & Access, and Heritage Planning Statement

Introduction

This statement accompanies a planning application to allow for the property to be occupied as an 8 person ‘sui generis’ HMO, representing a two person increase in occupancy of this existing HMO.

The Application Site

The property is a grade 2 listed mid 19th century end terrace, arranged over 3 storeys including a basement. A pedestrian side access laid to concrete hard-standing leads to the rear garden via steps down, with the garden accessed from the basement.

The property was occupied as a 13 bed hostel with warden accommodation until 2010, prior to reverting to a single dwelling-house occupied as a 5, then 6 bed HMO.

It is currently occupied as a 6 bedroom HMO - use class C4. License reference 611819 - license renewal application submitted and pending.

The locality is predominantly residential, comprising a mix of single family houses and flat conversions. Coley Hill is within a short walking distance of Reading town centre.

The property is situated within the Russell Street / Castle Hill Conservation area, and outside of any Article 4 direction area restricting small HMO's within the Borough.

Proposed Works / Alterations

Internal

The rear room to the ground floor level is intended to be utilised as a bedroom - entailing in-filling the current opening between the rooms. These rooms are both accessed off the hallway through separate internal fire doors. The in-fill shall comprise of acoustically insulated timber stud-work lined with plasterboard and skim coat finish, with timber skirting in-fill. The works shall leave the existing door linings and architrave intact.

External

An open sided canopy sheltering 3 No. Sheffield stands to provide for secure covered storage shall be sited on the existing concrete hard-standing behind the side hung gates, which also provides bins storage.

Relevant Planning History

83/TP/0267 – Change of use from 2 flats and 4 bed-sitting rooms with shared facilities to 13 bed hostel with warden accommodation – Approved 29/7/1983

83/TP/0276 – Minor internal alterations to permit change of use to 13 bed hostel with warden accommodation – Approved 29/7/1983

83/TP/1041 – Minor alterations to east elevation – Approved 12/1/1984

98/00150/LBC (980571) - Replacement fire alarms and emergency lighting systems, fire resistant doors upgrading understairs cupboards and staircase balustrades – Consent 17/4/98

10/01164/FUL (100728) - Change of use from hostel to dwellinghouse with internal alterations – Consent 11/8/10

10/01165/LBC (100729) - Change of use from hostel to dwellinghouse with internal alterations – Consent 11/8/10

10/01778/FUL (101936) - Repairs to fence and reinstatement of gate and pillars – Consent 21/4/11

10/01779/LBC (101573) - Listed Building Consent for reinstatement of fence and gate – Consent 21/4/17

HMO Checklist & Relevant Planning Policy

Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document – Adopted March 2023.

Appendix 4: Checklist. The checklist has been followed where applicable with the Applicants' assessment highlighted in red.

Checklist 1 (H8, H9, CC8, EN1, EN3, EN4): Any external alterations must be carried out sympathetically, respecting the physical character of the area.

The proposed bicycle store canopy would be discreetly sited behind an existing boundary wall and 1.8m high timber panel gates. No other external alterations are proposed.

Checklist 4 (CC8, H8): A proposal for conversion should not result in a dwelling-house being located directly between two HMOs.

The property is an end terrace.

Checklist 5 (H10): An appropriate level of private outdoor space will be expected.

A generous private rear garden is available.

Checklist 6 (CC8, H8): Issues such as those below need to be taken into account in any residential conversions application: • Privacy and overlooking; • Access to sunlight and daylight; • Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development; • Noise and disturbance; and • Crime and safety.

No development works are proposed.

Checklist 7 (H8): The property to be converted to a flat or large HMO should have four or more bedrooms or measure more than 120 square metres gross. When calculating the floor area of the property the measurement should be based on the external dimensions ten years before the application is determined or when built (whichever is the later).

This is an existing 6 bedroom HMO. The floor area is 250m² and formally accommodated a 13 bedroom hostel.

Checklist 8 (CC8, H8): Internal floorspace and headroom should be provided in all forms of residential resulting from conversions to allow for a high quality of life. The nationally-described space standards provide a good basis for assessment.

Nationally described space standards are significantly exceeded.

Checklist 10 (CC8, H8): Acceptable proposals for layouts will avoid locating living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens next to, above, or below proposed and neighbouring bedrooms. Instead, the ‘stacking’ of rooms of a similar type is preferable.

The new bedroom would be stacked below an existing bedroom and replace existing living room.

Checklist 11 (CC8, H8): Habitable rooms, such as living rooms and bedrooms, will include an external window. The provision of natural light and ventilation is a legal requirement under Environmental Health legislation.

All habitable rooms in the property benefit from sizeable external windows.

Checklist 15: HMOs located within a street where a residents’ parking permit scheme operates will not be entitled to on-street car parking permits. The same restrictions may apply to new flats in such streets, see the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD.

This is noted and prospective occupants are advised accordingly.

Checklist 16 (CC7, H8, H9, EN1, EN3, EN4): Removal of boundary treatment to accommodate parking or access to parking will not be permitted where it makes a valuable contribution to the character of the area.

The existing boundary treatment shall remain unaltered.

Checklist 17 (TR5, CC8, H8): The provision of outdoor cycle storage should have a secure, covered and convenient location. The storage area should be lockable with provision to secure bicycles within it.

An open sided canopy sheltering 3 No. Sheffield stands to provide for secure covered storage shall be sited on the existing concrete hard-standing behind the side hung gates as shown on the accompanying block plan.

Checklist 18 (H8, H10, H11, EN1, EN4): Sufficient and suitable refuse containers should be provided within the curtilage of the application building which are easily accessible for all occupants of the house and the refuse collectors and ensuring they are sympathetically located with regard to their visual impact. Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document – Adopted March 2023

Separate waste and recycling bins are sited behind a side hung timber gate on a concrete hardstanding to the side of the building. There is sufficient hard-standing to the front of the gates to leave the bins for curb-side collection.

Checklist 19 (CC7): Where possible, a level access from the public highway to the building’s principal entrance should be provided or retained.

The property is accessed via steps up to the entrance door and steps down to the rear garden. Any alterations to address this would be likely to adversely affect the Conservation area and listed building.

Checklist 20 (EN1): Proposals that would alter a listed building in a way that affects its character or appearance as a building of special architectural or historic interest will require listed building consent and will protect and where possible enhance the significance of the listed building.

A listed buildings consent application has been submitted in conjunction with this planning application. The physical works in association with this application are minor and would not affect the character of the building or original features.

Checklist 21 (CC9, H3, TR1, EN9, H3, H6): Developers should compensate for loss or damage created by a development and mitigate any impact caused. A planning obligation to secure a financial or other contribution towards physical or social infrastructure improvements may be sought.

An increase of two additional occupants would not represent any significant impact or trigger a requirement for financial compensation towards additional infrastructure.

Checklist 23: Early discussions with a Building Control Officer will improve the internal layout of the scheme and may avoid the need for external fire-escapes (which may require planning permission in their own right).

Checklist 24: The HMO team should be contacted about Environmental Health matters.

The building is in very good condition and fully compliant with HMO licensing, Environmental Health, and Building Regulations requirements. The kitchen facilities shall be increased to comprise 2 No.sinks, ovens / hobs, and fridge freezers, along with an extended worktop.

Checklist 26 (H8) for conversions to sui generis HMOs: A standard of one communal room for every 4-6 bedrooms (depending on the size of the bedroom) will be provided, which will have acceptable amenity standards and appropriate access for all residents.

A kitchen-dining room and separate dining room situated on the lower ground floor, as well as a living room to the upper ground floor level shall be available to all residents. Although the front room is partially below street level, both rooms benefit from a good amount of daylight as well as direct access to a sizeable rear garden.

Checklist 27 for conversions to sui generis HMOs: A proper agreement may be required to ensure acceptable management of all communal parts of the HMO.

The property is currently operated in accordance with the HMO license and would not increase the communal areas under management.

‘Tipping Point’ Threshold

While no planning records of ‘sui generis’ HMO’s within a 50m radius have been found, a full assessment has not been carried out, due to the existing status as a licensed HMO. This is in accordance with the relevant guidance below.

4.4.71 Planning permission will be required to change the use of a small HMO to a large HMO, or to intensify the use of a lawful large HMO (without any physical extension or external alteration to the property) by increasing the number of occupiers. In this instance the threshold limit will not be

triggered as the HMO has already been established in the street and, therefore, have no further effect on the concentration of HMOs and balance and mix of households in the local community.

Conclusion

The intensification of residential use of the building proposed requires minimal alteration and would have no impact upon the fabric of the building or historic character. The existing internal layout provides for spacious accommodation and facilities in excess of nationally proscribed space standards and the Councils' required HMO standards.

Appendix 1 - Photographs

Fig. 1 Ground floor internal room opening proposed to be in-filled



Fig. 2 – Ground floor internal room opening proposed to be in-filled

