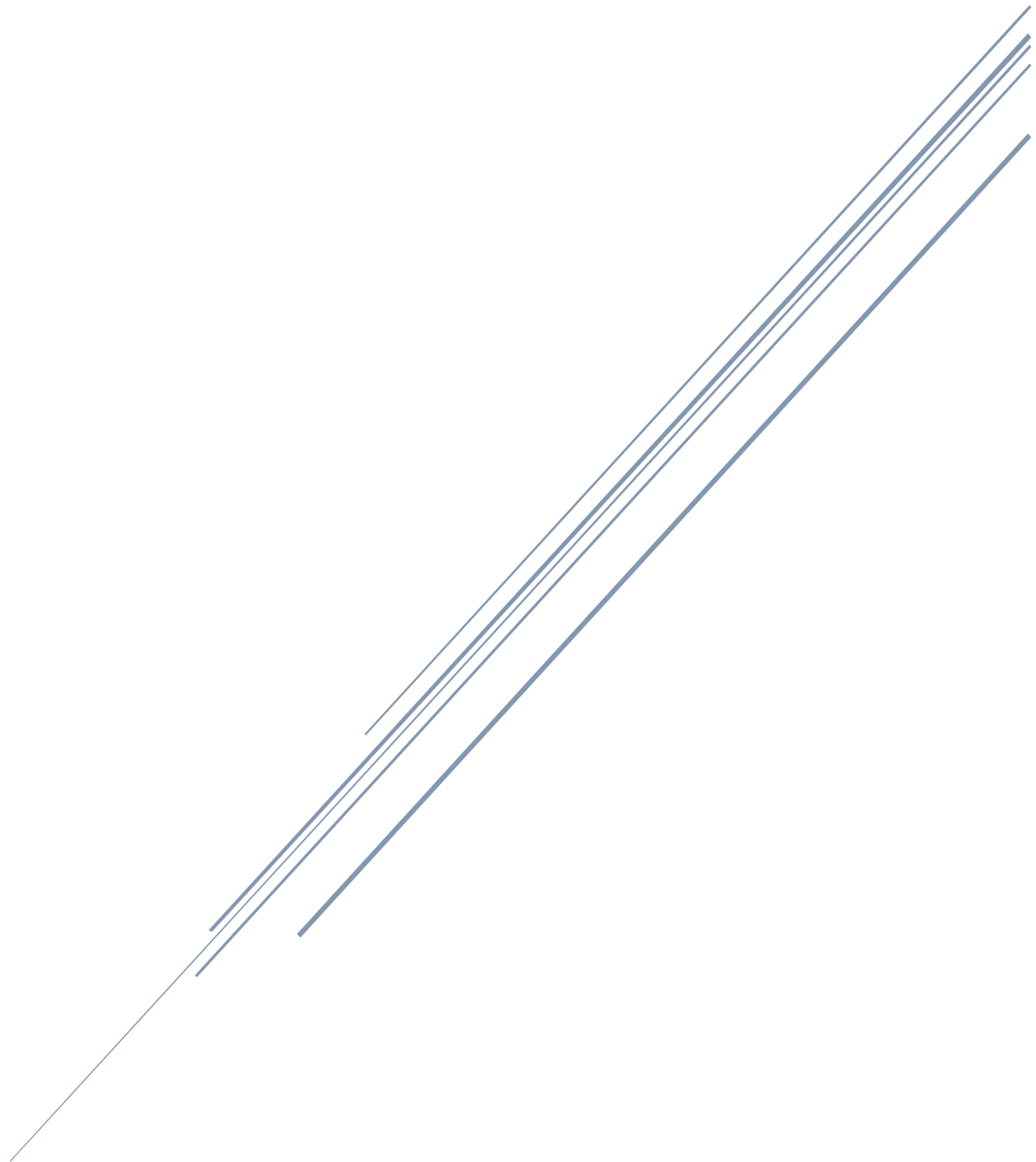


PLANNING STATEMENT

Planning application for change of use to Large HMO – SUI-GENERIS

At 33 Blagdon Road, Reading, Berkshire – RG2 7NT



SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

33 BLAGDON ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE – RG2 7NT

INTRODUCTION:

This planning application seeks approval for the change of use of an existing single-family dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) into a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Use Class Sui Generis). The property comprises seven bedrooms and is intended to accommodate a maximum of ten occupants, providing shared living arrangements in accordance with relevant housing and licensing regulations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposal seeks planning permission for the change of use from a single-family dwelling (Use Class C3) to a large HMO (Use Class Sui Generis), accommodating up to ten residents across seven bedrooms.

The proposed conversion aims to provide high-quality shared living arrangements, ensuring compliance with all relevant housing and licensing regulations. The internal layout is designed to balance communal living and individual privacy, featuring well-proportioned shared facilities, including a spacious living/dining area and a fully equipped kitchen. These amenities will support a functional, safe, and sustainable residential environment for future occupants.

This change of use aligns with local and national housing policies, addressing housing shortages and meeting the increasing demand for flexible accommodation options, particularly for young professionals, students, and key workers. By repurposing an existing dwelling within a predominantly residential area, the proposal contributes to efficient land use while preserving the architectural integrity of the property and its surrounding neighbourhood.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The property is located within Reading Borough, positioned on the northern side of Blagdon Road, near its junction with Torrington Road. It forms part of a predominantly residential area, characterized by large semi-detached houses with similar architectural styles.

The application site consists of a two-storey semi-detached dwelling, adjoining 48 Torrington Road. The property is not listed, not within a Conservation Area, and not subject to an Article 4 direction, meaning there are no additional planning restrictions affecting permitted development rights.

The property benefits from strong transport links, proximity to local amenities, and access to schools and healthcare facilities, making it an appropriate and sustainable location for the proposed change of use into a large HMO.

PLANNING HISTORY:

The property at 33 Blagdon Road has been subject to three planning applications before, according to the Reading Borough Council online planning resource. The applications comprise:

PL/22/0622 - Householder application for the proposed erection of a "Part Ground Floor rear extension and Part First Floor Rear and side extension". Approved 4 November 2022.

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PL/06/1025 - Full planning permission for “Conversion and extension of existing house to form 3 flats”. Refused 14 November 2006.

PL/02/1455 - Full planning permission for “Conversion of existing dwelling to provide two self-contained one bedroom units”. Refused 31 December 2002.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES:

The proposal has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and Residential Conversion Supplementary Planning Document (2023) and to all relevant material considerations:

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

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

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

- CC7 Design and the Public Realm
- CC8 Safeguarding Amenity
- H8 Residential Conversions
- H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Residential Conversions SPD (2023)

PROPOSAL:

This application seeks planning consent for the change of use of an existing single-family dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), comprising seven bedrooms and accommodating a maximum of ten persons (Use Class Sui Generis).

There are no proposed alterations to the external features of the property, including the front elevation, rear, or side aspects. The applicant has ensured that the original architectural character and features of the dwelling remain intact, preserving the property's visual harmony within the surrounding area and maintaining the architectural integrity of the neighbourhood.

Internally, the layout has been reconfigured to enhance functionality, safety, and compliance with all relevant housing and licensing regulations. Consideration has been given to potential intensification

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of activity, ensuring that the scale and impact of the proposed use remain compatible with the local residential character.

The proposed change of use aligns with the local need for sustainable housing and supports relevant planning policies aimed at increasing housing availability within the area.

LAYOUT OF THE PROPERTY:

The property comprises a total of seven bedrooms, thoughtfully distributed across two floors to maximize space and functionality.

Ground Floor:

The ground floor features three bedrooms:

- One located at the front right of the property, accessible from the main entrance hallway.
- A second bedroom positioned to the left of the entrance hallway.
- A third bedroom situated at the rear.
- A family-sized bathroom serves all ground-floor bedrooms. The kitchen, incorporating a utility area, is positioned at the rear left of the hallway. Additionally, a spacious 34sqm living/dining area is located within the extended side extension, providing a well-proportioned communal space. A centrally positioned staircase leads to the first floor from the entrance hallway.

First Floor:

The first floor accommodates four bedrooms:

- Two bedrooms positioned at the front of the property.
- Two double bedrooms situated within the extended side extension.
- Two full family-sized bathrooms are located at the rear, providing convenient access from the landing hallway.

The proposed layout has been carefully considered to optimize space efficiency, ensure compliance with housing standards, and maintain a high quality of living for future occupants.

BEDROOM DETAILS AND COMPLIANCE WITH SPACE STANDARDS:

The table below demonstrates how the existing bedrooms comply with the minimum space standards outlined in Reading Borough Council's HMO licensing guidelines.

No. of Bedrooms	Bedrooms Floor Location	Floor area of the bedrooms	Max. No. of people permitted	Min. HMO Space standards
Room 01	Ground Floor Front - right	10.2sqm	1	10.2sqm For double room
Room 02	Ground Floor Front - left	10sqm	1	6.5sqm For single room
Room 03	Ground Floor Rear Right	16.7sqm	2	10.2sqm For double room

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Room 04	First Floor Front - right	9.2sqm	1	6.5sqm For single room
Room 05	First Floor Front - Middle	10.1sqm	1	6.5sqm For single room
Room 06	First Floor Front – Left	12sqm	2	10.2sqm For double room
Room 07	First Floor Rear – left	14.8sqm	2	10.2sqm For double room

All bedroom floor areas have been documented in Schedule 1 of the standard licence conditions for HMOs. Four of the bedrooms meet the required space standards for double occupancy, allowing for a total accommodation capacity of up to ten persons, in line with Reading Borough Council’s HMO guidelines.

The proposed layout ensures compliance with Reading Borough Council’s HMO licensing requirements, including adequate provision of amenities, fire safety measures, and space standards to support a safe and well-managed living environment.

KEY FEATURES AND COMPLIANCE:

Exceeding Standards: All bedrooms meet or exceed the minimum space requirements, ensuring compliance with HMO regulatory standards. Each room provides adequate space for comfortable occupancy.

Natural Light and Ventilation: All rooms have clear-glazed windows or combined windows/doors, offering satisfactory natural lighting and ventilation.

Kitchen Provisions: The single kitchen is equipped to adequately support the needs of 10 occupants. Facilities include:

- A microwave oven.
- Two full-sized cooker (each with at least 4 burners) spread apart.
- A standard oven and grill.
- Sinks with drainer unit.
- Sufficient fridge/freezer capacity.

Utility Room and Kitchenette: A shared kitchenette, integrated into a 4sqm utility area, supplements the main kitchen. The arrangement is reasonable and sufficient for 6-10 residents.

Overall, the property provides high-quality living conditions with compliant bedrooms, appropriate kitchen amenities, and adequate light and ventilation to meet the requirements for up to 10 occupants.

IMPACT ON NEIGHBOUR AMENITY:

In accordance with the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), policy CC8 states that development “Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:

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

The proposed use of the property as a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) does not involve external alterations, ensuring there is no loss of privacy or reduction in daylight/sunlight for adjoining properties. The occupation of the property by up to 10 people, is proportionate to the property’s size and character within the context of the area. This limit helps to ensure that the scale of occupation remains reasonable and appropriate.

Additionally, the property is equipped with adequate facilities and provisions to accommodate the number of occupants without causing excessive noise or disturbance. The internal layout and operational arrangements have been carefully designed to minimize any potential impact on neighbouring occupiers.

As such, the proposed use complies with the aims and objectives of policies CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), safeguarding the amenity of both residents and neighbouring properties while achieving a high standard of living conditions.

TRANSPORT & HIGHWAY IMPACT:

In accordance with Policy TR5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019), developments should provide car parking and cycle parking appropriate to the accessibility of locations within the Borough and their connection to sustainable transport facilities, particularly public transport.

The application site, 33 Blagdon Road, Reading, is located within Zone 3 (Secondary Core Area) under the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2019). Based on the required parking provision of 0.25 spaces per bedroom, the development would require three parking spaces.

Given the property’s location within walking and cycling distance of local amenities, public transport hubs, and designated cycle routes, residents are expected to rely on sustainable transport rather than private car use. The local authority’s commitment to enhancing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure further supports this approach.

To encourage sustainable transportation, the development will provide secure and covered cycle storage positioned along the side elevation of the property, fronting Blagdon Road due to the property’s corner orientation. This placement ensures ease of access for residents while maintaining the aesthetic integrity of the streetscape.

With its excellent public transport links and enhanced cycling provisions, the development aligns with Reading Borough Council’s transport policies, promoting reduced car ownership and environmentally friendly travel options.

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GARDEN AMENITY SPACE:

The property benefits from a large rear garden (170 sqm), exceeding the minimum outdoor space requirements for HMOs under Reading Borough Council's amenity standards. The garden provides:

- Adequate space for outdoor recreation, supporting residents' well-being.
- Defined refuse storage areas, ensuring waste management efficiency.
- Landscaping considerations, preserving the property's character and enhancing green space within the neighbourhood.

This provision aligns with Policy H10 of the Residential Conversions SPD (2023), ensuring that residents have usable and well-maintained outdoor space conducive to high-quality living conditions.

REFUSE AND RECYCLING:

In accordance with Policies H8, H10 & H11 of the Residential Conversions SPD (2023), the development includes dedicated refuse and recycling storage positioned along the side elevation of the property, which, due to its corner positioning, visually fronts Blagdon Road.

The enclosure has been designed to:

- Integrate seamlessly with the surrounding streetscape, ensuring minimal visual impact while maintaining accessibility for waste collection operations.
- Provide sufficient bin capacity for general waste, recycling, and food waste disposal, in line with Reading Borough Council's collection schedule.
- Ensure compliance with local refuse storage regulations, facilitating efficient waste management without obstructing pedestrian or vehicle access.

The angled orientation of the property has been considered in the placement, ensuring the refuse area remains practical and aesthetically appropriate for both residents and neighbouring properties.

CYCLE STORAGE:

In line with Policies TR5, CC8 of the Reading Local Plan (2019) & H8 of the Residential Conversions SPD (2023), the development requires two cycle parking spaces. However, the proposal exceeds this standard by providing secure storage for four bicycles.

The cycle storage facility is positioned along the side wall of the property, effectively fronting Blagdon Road due to the corner orientation of the dwelling. The unit is:

- Fully enclosed and lockable, ensuring security and protection against theft or vandalism.
- Weather-protected, preventing environmental damage to stored bicycles.
- Strategically placed to ensure ease of access for residents, promoting the use of sustainable transport options.

This arrangement aligns with Reading Borough Council's commitment to expanding cycle infrastructure, ensuring residents have secure and convenient cycle storage, minimizing reliance on private vehicles while supporting green transport initiatives.

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JUSTIFICATION:

Principle of Development:

Policy H8 of the Residential Conversion SPD (2023) emphasizes the role of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in meeting local and strategic housing needs. It highlights that, where they are of a reasonable standard, HMOs should generally be protected.

Policy H8 states: *"Proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking, and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing."*

The proposed change of use aligns with these principles, ensuring that the conversion maintains residential character, provides high-quality accommodation, and meets local housing demand.

Key Points of the Application:

- **Contribution to Housing Supply:**

The proposal contributes to Reading's housing supply, addressing the growing demand for affordable rental accommodation. According to Reading Borough Council's Housing Needs Assessment (2024):

- Housing demand continues to outstrip supply, particularly for affordable rental properties.
- HMOs play a crucial role in providing flexible and cost-effective housing options for students, professionals, and key workers.
- The borough's strategic housing plan emphasizes the need for sustainable residential conversions to meet local housing targets.

By repurposing an existing dwelling, the development supports Reading Borough Council's objectives for housing availability and sustainable communities.

- **Sustainable and Mixed Community:**

The conversion contributes to achieving an appropriately mixed and sustainable community. The proposed housing mix ensures that single-family housing remains the dominant form of dwelling in the vicinity while maintaining the area's physical character.

Additionally, the proposal aligns with Reading Borough Council's commitment to sustainable development, ensuring that the conversion supports local infrastructure, transport accessibility, and environmental considerations.

- **Living Standards and Amenities:**

The proposal ensures high-quality living conditions, complying with Reading Borough Council's HMO licensing conditions:

- All habitable rooms (e.g., bedrooms and living rooms) are equipped with external windows, ensuring natural light and ventilation, in compliance with Environmental Health legislation.

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- Cycle storage provisions exceed the minimum requirement set forth by Policy T5 of the Local Plan (2019), with secure storage for four bicycles in a lockable container positioned along the side elevation of the property.
- Sufficient refuse containers have been positioned within the curtilage of the property, ensuring ease of access for occupants and refuse collectors while maintaining visual harmony with the surrounding environment.

The property offers a large amount of habitable space, effectively accommodating the proposed seven rooms and a maximum of ten occupants. The applicant has ensured that the conversion complies with standards for large HMOs (Sui Generis) while maintaining comfort and welfare for residents.

- **Commitment to Property Maintenance:**

The applicant is committed to maintaining the property to an exemplary standard upon its conversion to an HMO, implementing:

- Regular cleaning schedules and consistent maintenance practices.
- Thoughtfully planned on-site amenities to support the proposed use.
- Compliance with Reading Borough Council's HMO management regulations, ensuring fire safety, waste disposal, and tenant welfare.

This approach reflects the applicant's dedication to high-quality accommodation and compliance with relevant housing and licensing requirements.

CONCLUSION:

This proposal for the change of use to a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) is a well-considered response to Reading's housing needs, fully aligning with Reading Borough Council's planning policies. It provides high-quality, professionally managed accommodation, ensuring compliance with all relevant housing and licensing regulations.

The internal layout has been thoughtfully designed to maximize space efficiency, support safety and tenant welfare, and enhance living standards. The proposal meets local sustainability objectives, promoting efficient land use while ensuring that the character and appearance of the property remain unchanged, with no external alterations affecting the surrounding streetscape.

The applicant is committed to responsible property management, implementing regular maintenance, cleaning schedules, and safety measures to uphold high living standards. The addition of secure cycle storage and well-integrated refuse facilities further supports a sustainable and well-functioning residential environment.

By providing affordable, shared accommodation in a strategically located property, the development helps meet rising demand for flexible housing options, particularly among students, professionals, and key workers. Given its compliance with all relevant policies, its positive contribution to local housing needs, and its commitment to high-quality accommodation standards, it is respectfully submitted that planning permission should be granted for the proposed large HMO.