

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park Ward

App Ref: PL/25/1139

Address: 15 Whiteknights Road, Reading, RG6 7BY

Proposal: Retrospective change of use of residential dwelling (use class C3) to 6-bedroom HMO (use class C4).

Applicant: Mr Fakrul Islam

Received date: 12/08/2025

Target Decision date: 07/10/2025

Case Officer: Louise Coveney-Fuller

APPLICATION SITE/PROPOSAL

The application site comprises a linked detached semi-detached property located on Whiteknights Road, within an Article 4 Direction area which restricts the permitted change of use from C3 dwellinghouse to C4 small House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

The property at 15 Whiteknights Road is currently in use as a six-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). This application seeks to regularise the change of use of the site from a residential dwelling (Use Class C3) to an HMO (Use Class C4). The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, comprising a mix of HMOs, single-family dwellings, and flats.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION /LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION

A site notice was displayed at the application site covering the consultation period.

No letters of representation have been received.

INTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

Environmental Protection- No objection has been received.

Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended)

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

CC9: Securing Infrastructure

CR2: Design in Central Reading

EM1: Provision of Employment

EN15: Air Quality

H2: Density and Mix

H5: Standards for New Housing

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

SPG/SPD

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development

The application site lies within an area covered by an Article 4 Direction. The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) recognises that the "tipping point" is reached when the concentration of HMOs becomes over-dominant, resulting in a community that is no longer considered mixed or sustainable. Paragraph 5.43 of the SPD states that:

"Planning permission will not normally be granted where the proportion of HMOs will result in HMOs representing 25% or more of the residential properties within a circle of 50m radius measured from the application site."

In accordance with this guidance, the concentration of HMOs within a 50m radius of the application site has been assessed. The calculation was based on the proportion of properties in known HMO use (Use Class C4 or Sui Generis) against the total number of residential properties (including those in Use Class C3, C4, and Sui Generis HMO use).

Data sources used in this assessment include records from Environmental Health, Council Tax, the Council's Enforcement Team, unimplemented planning permissions for HMOs, and information from property listing platforms such as Rightmove.

Based on this assessment, the total number of HMO properties within the 50m radius, including the application site, is below the 25% threshold set out in the SPD. As such, the proposal does not exceed the Council's defined concentration limit for HMOs

Character of the area

Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) seeks to ensure that new development enhances and preserves the local character.

The application site is currently in use as a 6 bed HMO and harmonises well with the existing street scene. The change of use has not resulted in an adverse impact on the character of the area or the wider existing street scene. As such no concerns, are raised in this regard.

Impact on Neighbouring Residential 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.

No external works are proposed so no overbearing, overlooking or overshadowing concerns have occurred . In addition, no impacts on noise and disturbance have occurred .

Transport Considerations

Policies TR1 (Achieving the Transport Strategy), TR3 (Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters) and TR5 (Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging) seek to address access, traffic, highway and parking relates matters relating to development.

No change has occurred or is considered to occur to existing parking or access arrangements within the application site no concerns are considered to occur in this regard.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the proposed change of use is acceptable in principle and would has not result in an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the existing building, or the wider surrounding area nor has development resulted in an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties or resulted in a harmful transport implications.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission subject to conditions.