

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/25/0960 Full planning permission

Address: 32 WAYLEN STREET, READING, RG1 7UR

Proposal: Change of use of small HMO (C4) to seven bedroom, seven person large HMO (Sui Generis) (amended)

Applicant: Varsity Design Ltd

Received date: 07/07/2025

Target Decision date: 24/10/2025 (Ext)

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal site is a two storey (with loft conversion) end of terrace property currently in C4 small HMO use comprising 6 bedrooms across ground, first and loft floors. The property is located on the western side of Waylen Street in a well-established residential location. It has a small, hard landscaped, front garden enclosed with a boundary wall. To the rear is a large hard surfaced area, part of which is used for parking. There is a further area owned by the applicant, which appears to be parking spaces available for rental. The applicant has rights of access over the side path (visible within the photo below and edged blue on the location plan).



Location Plan



Front – Google Streetview image 2020



Rear



Existing and Proposed First, Second and Basement Plans (no change)

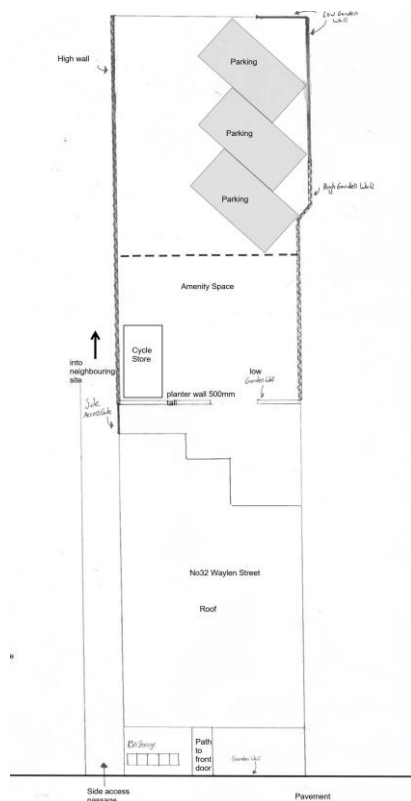
The site is outside of the Article 4 area for change of use from C3 to C4 small HMOs.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

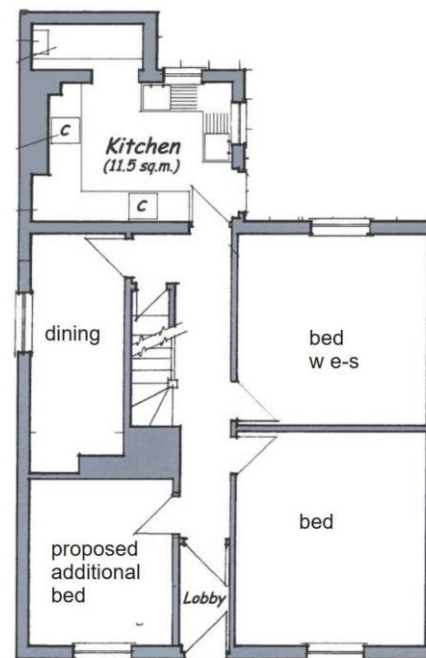
The proposal is to change the existing 6 bedroom C4 small HMO to a 7 bed 7 person Sui Generis HMO by converting the ground floor lounge to a further bedroom in addition to the existing two bedrooms at ground floor, three at first floor and one at second floor. The proposed additional bedroom would be 9.6sqm. There would be two communal spaces – one at ground floor (dining area) and a space in the basement. To the rear a covered cycle storage area would be included with 3 sheffield stands, 3 car parking spaces, along with private amenity space.

Plans and other information considered as received 26th September 2025, unless otherwise stated:

- Drawing no: WSLOC – Location Plan
- Drawing no: WS1 V4 - Existing Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing no: WS2 V4 - Existing, First, Second and Basement Floor Plans [including Section]
- Drawing no: WS3 V4 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- Drawing no: WS4 V4 - Proposed First, Second and Basement Floor Plans [including Section]
- Drawing no: WS5 – Site Layout Plan
- Cycle Plan, received 7th July 2025
- Planning Statement, ref JS/HV/5543WS, dated 24/9/25, prepared by John Phillips Planning Consultancy, received 26th September 2025



Proposed Site Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/13/1026 - Change of use from Offices to House in Multiple Occupation – Approved 5/11/2013

PL/13/1665 - Change of use of 32 Waylen Street from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 1 x 4 bed house. Prior Notification under Class J, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). – Approved 20/1/2014

PL/13/1665 - Change of use of 32 Waylen Street from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwellinghouses) to comprise 1 x 4 bed house. Prior Notification under Class J, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended). – Approved 20/1/2014

4. **CONSULTATIONS**

A site notice was erected on 12th August 2025. The site visit undertaken on 26th August 2025.



A letter of representation was received from 30A Waylen Street. In summary this was an objection relating to the reassigning of the lounge to a bedroom, which *“will mean that there is no internal area for socialising, so the only place to gather socially will be outside either on the street or at the back in the parking area.”*

Planning Officer Note: The proposal includes re assigning the basement storage area to be a communal room.

The following internal teams were consulted:

Transport Development Control, RBC - This property is already in use as a 6 bedroom HMO, this application seeks to extend it to a 7 bedroom HMO. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the proposed HMO development would be required to provide parking provision of 0.25 parking spaces per lettable room; each parking space should be 2m x 5m with 6m forecourt depths. Based on the proposed level of accommodation, the development would require 2 parking spaces (rounded up from 1.75). Plans illustrate an existing car parking area at the rear of the site accessed from a shared access from Baker Street. Provision is deemed acceptable.

There are extensive parking restrictions in place in the vicinity of the site including the Councils residential parking permit scheme also operates in the area. Under the Borough's current parking standards, this proposal would generate additional pressure for parking in the area. There should be an assumption that any future occupants of the proposed HMO will not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits which would be covered by condition and an informative applied. This will ensure that the development does not harm the existing amenities of the neighbouring residential properties by adding to the already high level of on street car parking in the area.

The bin storage area, as now, will be situated at the property frontage. No additional bins are likely needed for the addition of one bedroom, however it is recommended that the Council's waste and recycling team are contacted to ensure the correct capacity and type of bins are provided.

A Bike storage has been illustrated at the rear of the site. In accordance with the Councils current adopted standards a 7- bedroom HMO would require 0.5 storage spaces per room, this equates to

4 spaces (2 Sheffield stands) for the development. The proposed provision complies with the requirements set out in TR5 and the parking standards SPD.

Recommended conditions are: Cycle storage as approved, HMO parking permits (notification to LPA) and HMO (notification to occupants)

Private Sector Housing, RBC - Private Sector Housing Records show a number of HMO licences for the property with the current licence running from 26/5/21 to 25/5/26 for a maximum of up to 12 people.

Planning Officer Note: The current use is a C4 small HMO for 3-6 unrelated persons sharing one or more basic facilities. The use by more than 6 people requires planning permission.

The Private Sector Housing team will need to be notified, by the licence holder/owner, of any changes to the amenities or sleeping accommodation as this is likely to require a variation of the licence.

There are no objections to the change of use of small HMO (C4) to seven bedroom, seven person large HMO (Sui Generis) (amended). The owner will need to contact Building Control concerning any additional toileting facilities. No further comments, observations or requirements to be made at this time.

5. 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.

6. 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 2021

National Planning Guidance 2014 onwards

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaption to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

H8: Residential Conversions

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Residential Conversions (2023)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)

Guide to Amenity Standards applicable to Houses in Multiple Occupation that require a Licence, RBC

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 For conversions to flats or for multiple occupation the main planning policy is Policy H8 (Residential Conversions), which states that: *“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.*

Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats or for multiple occupation will only be acceptable where:

- *The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features;*
- *The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;*
- *There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;*
- *There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;*
- *Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and*
- *The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.....”*

“Additionally, in the case of sui generis houses in multiple occupation (HMOs):

- *The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross.*
- *There is sufficient communal space.”*

- 7.2 In addition 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;”*

“...Where an otherwise acceptable development could change its character to a use that would have a greater impact on amenity without needing planning permission, conditions will be applied to restrict such changes.”

- 7.3 Policy H10 is with regard to ensuring that dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space.
- 7.4 Together with the relevant adopted local planning policies, the appraisal of this application has been assessed against the adopted Residential Conversions SPD (2023), which provides further guidance on the interpretation of the adopted policies. Section 2 of the SPD deals with ‘All Conversions’, and Section 4 ‘Sui Generis HMOs’. The SPD sets assessment matters against checklist items (1-27) and the relevant ones have been referred to below.

Main considerations:

- 7.5 The main issues to be considered are:
- i) Principle of development: Size requirements and whether the conversion of the property would result in unduly diluting or harming a mixed and sustainable community;
 - ii) Design
 - iii) The impact on amenity of existing and future residents of the property and neighbouring properties;
 - iv) Car/ Cycle Parking;
 - v) Landscaping and Ecology
 - vi) Bin Storage;
 - vii) Other Matters
- (i) **Principle of development: Size requirements and whether the conversion of the property would result in unduly diluting or harming a mixed and sustainable community (Policy H8 and SPD Checklist 3)**
- 7.6 Any residential conversion must contribute to achieving an appropriately mixed and sustainable community by providing an acceptable housing mix, ensuring that, as appropriate, single family housing remains the dominant form of dwelling in the vicinity of the application, taking account of the relevant threshold approach, and ensuring there is not a detrimental impact on the physical character of the area. As the property is already in HMO use (C4) then there would no differing effect with regard to a mixed and sustainable community and there is no requirement to undertake the ‘tipping point’ calculation as defined in the Residential Conversions SPD.
- 7.7 Although the conversion of the property to an HMO has already taken place Policy H8 identifies that to be suitable to be converted to a large Sui Generis HMO, the property should have a gross floor area in excess of 120m² when measured externally. The property measures in excess of 120sqm externally, so meets this requirement and, therefore, the conversion into a large HMO is acceptable in principle.
- (ii) **Design (Policies CC7, CC8, H8, H9, H10 and SPD Checklist items 1 and 2)**
- 7.8 Policy CC7 requires all developments 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.
- 7.9 The proposal only includes an open fronted new cycle store with timber sides and a plastic sheet roof proposed to be located within the rear amenity area, accessed from the shared side path. This would be an acceptable appearance for this structure.

(iii) **The impact on amenity of existing and future residents of the property and neighbouring properties (Policies CC8, H8 and H10 and SPD Checklist items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11)**

Room Sizes

- 7.10 The proposed additional HMO room would have an internal dimension of 9.6sqm and this would meet the nationally described space standards (Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard', 2015, DCLG) and would accord with Regulation 2 of the 'The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018', which refers to national minimum standards for sleeping accommodation as:

- 6.51 square metres for one person aged 10 years or over;
- 10.5 square metres for two persons aged 10 years or over;

- 7.11 The bedroom is proposed for single occupancy and exceeds the above national minimums and is, therefore, acceptable in terms of size. The number and occupancy of each room will be restricted by condition.

Communal Space

- 7.12 The SPD identifies that the amount of communal space that is considered appropriate in a large HMO would be dependent on the number and size of bedrooms. The standard set out is for one communal room for every 4-6 bedrooms depending on the sizes of the bedrooms. The scheme has a kitchen and separate dining room at ground floor. Further to discussion with the applicant, a separate communal room at basement level is also proposed. Whilst this would not have outlook/access to light, given the good size bedrooms as well as the kitchen and dining space, this is on balance considered acceptable as an additional communal area. The overall level of communal provision is considered acceptable. A condition is recommended to ensure that the communal areas are retained for communal use only.

Amenity Space

- 7.13 The application includes a rear amenity area, which is considered to provide sufficient space for functional communal space and sitting out. This is considered to be in accordance with Policy H10.

External windows

- 7.14 The proposed bedroom would benefit from an external window.

Layout/Stacking of Rooms

- 7.15 The Council's SPD seeks to avoid layouts which locate living rooms, bathrooms and kitchens, next to, above, or below, proposed or neighbouring bedrooms. The layout largely achieves this with only the proposed bedroom at ground floor located next to the communal living/kitchen/dining room.

Noise and Disturbance and Pollution

- 7.16 The level of noise and disturbance from seven people would not be significantly different to its existing HMO use for up to 6 people. In any case additional disturbance or nuisance is controlled by civil enforcement (police) and statutory nuisance legislation (Environmental Health).

(iii) **Car/Cycle parking (Policies H8, CC8 and TR5 and SPD Checklist items 14, 15 & 17)**

- 7.17 Policy TR5 states that parking standards for all residential conversions should be in accordance with the Council's adopted Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD.

- 7.18 In accordance with the Parking Standards SPD, an HMO property would be required to provide 0.25 car parking spaces per room. Three car parking spaces are proposed to the rear, accessed from Baker Street, and meets and exceeds the required standards.

- 7.19 As there are extensive parking restrictions in place in the vicinity of the site, conditions and an informative are included advising that any future occupants of the proposed HMO will not be issued with resident or visitor parking permits.
- 7.20 In accordance with the SPD, cycle storage for an HMO should be provided at a ratio of 0.5 secure cycle storage spaces for each letting room, in the form of Sheffield type stands within a lockable store. Twelve cycle spaces are indicated within a lockable facility in the rear garden. A compliance condition is recommended to ensure that this facility is provided and retained for bicycle parking at all times.

iv) Bin Storage (Policy H8 and SPD Checklist item 18)

- 7.21 Bins would be retained to the front of the property as existing. No bin store is proposed, but as this application relates to the addition of one bedroom it is not considered necessary to require a condition for details of a bin store to be submitted and approved.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposal has been considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and relevant SPDs and is considered acceptable. The proposal is not considered to result any material harm over and above the existing use. HMO Management conditions are not considered necessary given the minimal increase from existing 6 bed HMO to proposed 7 bed HMO. The recommendation is, therefore, to GRANT, subject to the following conditions and informatives:

Conditions

- Standard 3-year time limit
- Approved Plans
- HMO Communal Space to be Retained
- HMO Occupation
- HMO Cycle Storage – details as approved
- Parking Permit Restrictionx2

Informatives

Terms and conditions
Highways
Parking permits
Positive & proactive