

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Park

App Ref: PL/25/0778 Full planning permission

Address: 393 LONDON ROAD, READING, RG1 3PB

Proposal: Part retrospective change of use from a large sui generis HMO to 4 self-contained C3 apartments (ground floor – 2x 1 beds; First floor – 1x 1bed; Split level flat - Part first/part second (attic) floors – 1x 3 bed) and an extension to the existing dormer to create an 'I' shaped dormer (amended).

Applicant: Mr Khawar Hussain

Received date: 26/05/2025

Target Decision date: 6/3/2026 (Ext)

Case Officer: Alison Amoah

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The site now comprises a two storey mid-terrace property with rooms in the roof space and rear 'I' shaped dormer roof extension, located on the north side of London Road. The property is currently vacant, and the proposal applied for is largely complete (*the applicant confirmed that work had originally commenced on 19/9/22 as there had been a previous approval ref: PL/18/1504 for change of use from a large sui generis HMO to 5 self-contained C3 apartments units, including formation of accommodation at basement level, and restarted in June 2025*) At the time of this submission, construction works were ongoing and the works to create the 'I' shaped dormer had not been commenced, although the works to create the dormer extension have now been completed. Prior to this the application site was in use as a large sui generis 9 person HMO.

The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area.



Location Plan



Rear prior to works



Google Streetview image (July 2023)

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The amended part retrospective proposal includes amended interior layout to the first and second (attic) floors, an enlarged rear dormer in an 'I' formation, and removal of the basement and associated front access steps, as compared to the approval under PL/18/1504.

The proposed scheme includes 4 no. units as follows:

Ground floor – 2x 1 beds (labelled as Apartments 1 & 2)

First Floor – 1x 1 bed (labelled as Apartment 3); 1 bedroom and ensuite (labelled as part of Apartment 4)

Attic Floor – 2 bedrooms (labelled as Apartment 4) making Apartment 4 three bedrooms in total

Plans and other information considered:

- Drawing no: 100 Rev B, dated 5/9/23 – Location Red Lines and Construction Strategy [includes Block Plan], received 15th June 2025
- Drawing no: 129, dated 15/6/25 – Existing Ground and First (post approval), received 1st July 2025

- Drawing no: 130, dated 15/6/25 – Existing Attic and Roof (post approval), received 1st July 2025
- Drawing no: 104 Rev A, dated 5/9/23 – Existing Entrance Elevation and Typical Longitudinal Section 2, received 27th May 2025
- Drawing no: 105 Rev B, dated 5/9/23 – Existing Rear Elevation and Typical Longitudinal Section 1, received 27th May 2025
- Drawing no: 122 Rev F, dated 15/2/24 – Proposed Ground Floor, received 14th February 2026
- Drawing no: 124 Rev F, dated 17/7/25 – Proposed First and Attic Floor Plan, received 17th July 2025
- Drawing no: 125 Rev B, dated 15/2/24 – Proposed Entrance and Rear Elevations, received 27th May 2025
- Drawing no: 126 Rev D, dated 15/2/24 – Proposed Section and Side Elevation, received 12th February 2026
- Design and Access Statement, dated 22nd May 2025, prepared by Jade 3 Architecture Ltd, received 26th May 2025
- Cover Letter dated 16th June 2025, prepared by Jade 3 Architecture Ltd, received 16th June 2025
- Sustainability Compliance Statement, dated 4/3/26, prepared by Greens Surveyors Ltd, received 5th March 2026

Existing Front Elevation and Side Section

(Prior to works now undertaken)



Existing Rear Elevation and Section



Proposed Front and Side Elevation/Section

Proposed Rear Elevation and Section

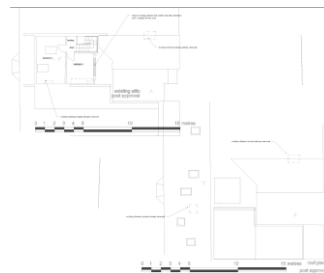
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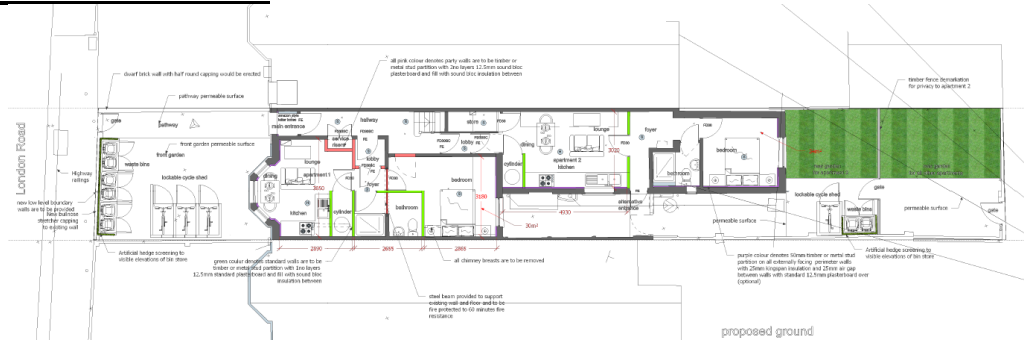


Existing Ground and First Floor Plans
(prior to works now undertaken, but post chimney approval)

Existing Attic and Roof Plans
(prior to works now undertaken, but post chimney approval)

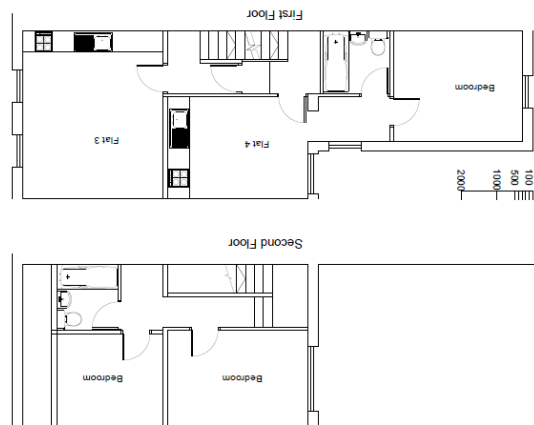
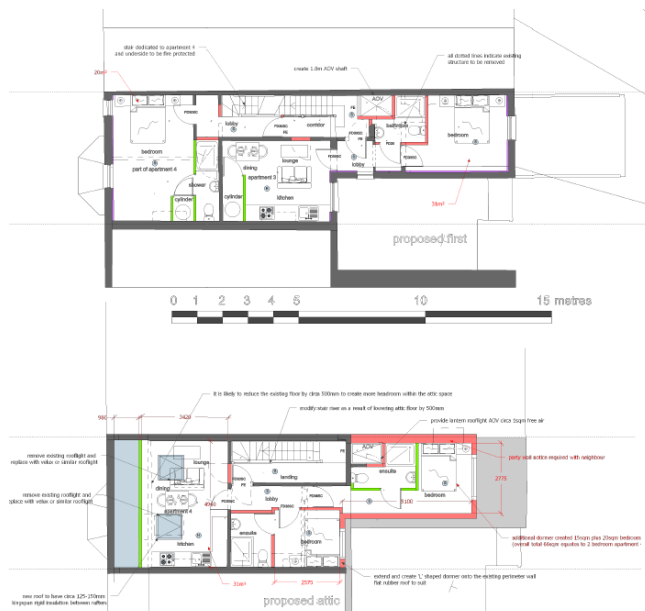


Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed First and Attic Floor Plans
(Works now complete)

Approved First and Attic Floor Plans (18/1504)



3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

180213/PREAPP – Change of use from a 9 room licensed HMO to form 6 no. single bedroom self-contained flats to include the formation of a basement flat – Pre-application advice letter sent 27th March 2018

PL/18/1504/FUL - Change of use from a large sui generis HMO to 5 self- contained C3 apartments (3 x 1 bed and 2 x 2 bed units) including formation of accommodation at basement level – Approved with S106 31st October 2019.

PL/22/0213/APPCON - Discharge of conditions 4 (noise levels), 5 (air quality), 6 (bicycle parking), 9 (construction method statement), 10 (noise and dust), 12 (BREEAM) and 14 (landscaping) of planning permission 181504/FUL – Approved 26th April 2022

4. CONSULTATIONS

No consultations were undertaken under this application as the majority of the proposal is the same as that approved under PL/18/1504 and no material change, which would have required further consultation.

Under the previously approved application Transport was consulted and they had no objection subject to conditions to secure submission and approval of cycle parking. Condition 6 (bicycle parking) was approved under ref: PL/22/0123. A compliance condition is recommended in accordance with the previously approved details.

A site notice was erected on 27th August 2025.



No letters of representation have been received.

Discussions with the agent/background

The application was originally submitted as a Section 73 variation of condition application, in order to amend plans as originally approved under permission PL/18/1504. However, the officer advised the applicant, via email on 11/6/25, that due to a proposed change to the number of units, mix of units and the inclusion of an 'I' shaped dormer that this would have had the effect of amending the original description of development which is restricted due to the Finney ruling. Therefore, the application was converted into a full, part retrospective, application.

In addition, the original permission included a basement, and this element of the scheme was carried forward into the original application submission under this current application. However, the applicant made it clear that the basement, and associated front access steps would not be brought forward at this stage. As this element would have necessitated a s106 legal agreement for an Affordable Housing contribution (as previously) the applicant decided to remove this element from this proposal.

It should be noted that by the time of this application submission the chimneys (partly on the roofs of adjacent properties) had been removed and, therefore, Certificate A (i.e. indicating the proposals being wholly within the applicant's ownership) was submitted.

5. 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 (Dec 2024)

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

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

EN15: Air Quality

EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

H1: Provision of Housing

H2: Density and Mix

H3: Affordable Housing

H5: Standards for New Housing

H8: Residential Conversions

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

- Affordable Housing SPD (2021)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)
- Residential Conversions SPD (2023)

Local Plan Partial Update

The current version of the Local Plan turned five years old on 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up-to-date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024 and the submission draft submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 9th May 2025.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become out of date when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this pre-application is that they remain in accordance with national policy. The objectives of the policies listed above remain very similar in the draft

updated Local Plan, and although at present they have some weight in the decision -making process the current policies can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

6. APPRAISAL

The relevant matters are as follows:

- a) Principle
- b) Design and Impact on the Character of the Area
- c) Amenity/Environmental Matters
- d) Housing Mix
- e) Transport
- f) Sustainability
- g) Other

a) Principle

Permission was granted previously for conversion from a large Sui Generis HMO to five no. C3 flats and therefore, the principle of the use has already been established following the commencement. There have been some wording changes to relevant policies (The Sites and Detailed Policies Policy DM8 now replaced with the Adopted Reading Borough Council Local Plan Policy H8) and the supporting Residential Conversions SPD has been updated (2013 now 2023) since the previous permission. However, the overall thrust of the policy (set out as follows) and guidance remains the same:

“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 conversions of houses to self-contained flats:

- *The property to be converted measures more than 120 square metres gross;*
- *At least 25% of the units formed and, where there are 4 or fewer units at least one unit of accommodation, should be suitable for family occupation with a minimum of two bedrooms.....”.*

As previously, the proposal for a change of use to flats needs to be considered against the criteria within the policies and guidance highlighted above, albeit the existing permission is a very significant material consideration, which clearly establishes the overall principle of the change of use is acceptable. The relevant matters are addressed in the assessment below.

a) Design and Impact on the Character of the Area

Policies CC7, H8 and the SPD seek to preserve or enhance the character of the area in which a development is located.

The external changes include rooflights to the front, removal of chimneys, an 'I' shaped rear dormer, bin and cycle storage (to the front and rear) and boundary treatment to the front and boundary with no. 391. Compared to the previous permission the front steps for the basement have been excluded from the proposal. The rooflights, chimney removal and a more extensive bin and cycle storage as compared to this proposal (related to 5 as opposed to the now proposed 4 no. units) were approved under the original permission and for cycle storage the subsequent discharge of condition approval, and remain acceptable. With regard to the enlarged and now an 'I' shaped rear dormer this would allow for improved internal headroom and useable floorspace (enlarging the split level flat to create a 3 bed). There are lots of examples of this type of arrangement, which in many cases would be possible under permitted development rights. There would be no side facing windows, and it would not exceed the existing ridge height, and would use matching materials.

As previously, the proposal includes for some enhancements to the front area with new boundary treatment, and to the rear which would reduce the extent of the hardstanding and would enhance the appearance of the property within the street-scene whilst improving outlook for future occupiers of the units to the front of the property.

The proposal is still considered to accord with Policies CC7, H9 and the Residential Conversions SPD.

c) Amenity/ Environmental Matters

Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of existing and future occupiers. Policies H8 and the Residential Conversions SPD seek that a suitable standard of residential amenity is provided for future occupiers. Policy H10 requires dwellings to be provided with functional private or communal open space. Policies EN15 and EN16 seek to protect and mitigate development from pollution.

Under the previous permission it was considered that there would be no undue harm to the amenity of surrounding residents. This proposal is for one fewer units, so it is still considered that this would be the case and in the context of the existing noisy road environment and that previously the site had been used for a nine person HMO.

As the works are now complete there is no requirement for a construction method statement and scheme to control construction noise and dust. Detail was submitted and approved as required under the original permission.

The proposed unit and room sizes are considered adequate to provide a suitable standard of amenity for future occupiers. Ceiling heights would exceed the recommended minimum for such accommodation. The additional dormer space would improve the head height and space to Apartment 4.

The proposal would continue to provide all habitable rooms with suitable outlook and daylighting.

As the property is located on one of the main roads into and out of Reading town centre, such there is potential for adverse noise and air quality impacts upon future occupiers, the original permission included conditions requiring submission of a noise mitigation scheme and an air quality mitigation scheme prior to the commencement of development. These conditions were discharged and compliance with the approved details are included as conditions.

Policy H10 sets out that where a proposal incorporates a family sized unit, that unit should have direct access to a usable area of private, rather than communal amenity space. The proposed 3-bedroom flat split across first and second (attic) floors would have no direct access to the rear communal garden area, although the rear 1 bedroom unit at ground floor level would. Given the constraints of the layout of the

existing terraced property this provision of direct access to amenity space is considered reasonable in the context of Policy H10. Flats without direct access to amenity space are not uncommon in town centre locations. There is a rear access to the garden from the ginnel (narrow pathway) to the rear of the site which would allow the occupiers of the other flats within the property to access the amenity space, albeit not directly. As stated above the Proposed Ground Floor Plan includes details of the area to the front and rear of the building and this would be included as an approved plan.

The proposed scheme, subject to compliance conditions, is considered to accord with the requirements of Policies CC8, H8, EN15 and EN16 and the Residential Conversions SPD.

d) Housing Mix

Policy H8 and the SPD requires proposals for conversion of properties to self-contained flats to include at least 25% of the units formed as suitable for family accommodation with a minimum of 2 bedrooms. The proposal would provide a 1x 3 bed unit (of 4 no. total units) and, therefore, accords with this requirement.

e) Transport

Policy TR3 requires developments to not have a detrimental effect on safety, congestion and the environment. Policy TR4 seeks facilities for improving access for cyclists. Policy TR5 requires that development should make the provision car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the accessibility.

As with the previous approved scheme there is no proposed parking. Transport had no objection to zero parking in this highly accessible location and in the context that there is a pedestrian crossing along the site frontage restricting lawful access to any parking area to the front.

As the site is located in an area designated as a Residents Parking Permit Area, it is still considered relevant to include conditions restricting automatic entitlement to parking permits to 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 proposal includes for 1 cycle parking space per flat split across lockable secure storage to the front and rear of the building. This accords and exceeds the Council's cycle parking standards of a minimum of 0.5 spaces per 1-2 bed flats and 1 per 3 bed flats.

Bin storage is proposed to the front and rear of the site with servicing from London Road and Liverpool Street as other properties. Similar details were approved under a discharge of conditions attached to the original permission.

Subject to compliance conditions the proposal is considered to accord with policies TR3, TR4 and TR5.

f) Sustainability

Policy CC2 states that proposals will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change. Policy CC2, supported by the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction SPD seeks that: *"All minor non-residential developments or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Very Good' standard as a minimum."* A sui-generis use, as was, is specifically defined within the supporting text as a non- C3 use, so it is a conversion to residential.

Conditions for the submission and approval of a design stage BREEAM and final BREEAM were attached to the original permission (PL/18/1504), with the former having been approved under PL/22/0213 (with a target BREEAM score for the development of 73.95% - a BREEAM rating of Excellent).

However, it is acknowledged that the proposals, as largely a refurbishment proposal of an older building and change of use of existing building, do not neatly align with the standard BREEAM requirements. As such, it is considered reasonable to allow a flexible approach in this respect, so the submitted Sustainability Compliance Statement has been accepted as a means to demonstrate how the completed scheme has met the criteria within the approved Interim BREEAM Certificate (as approved under PL/22/0213) and a compliance condition is included.

g) Other matters

Biodiversity

Biodiversity net gain became mandatory for minor developments from 2nd April 2024. The application is exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain as it would not impact on hedgerows or priority habitat.

Affordable Housing

Under the previous permission an Affordable Housing contribution, was secured as an obligation, via a S106 legal agreement, with respect to the newly created basement unit only. This unit has been removed from this proposal, and although the 'I' shaped dormer provides extra space to Apartment 4 it does not create an additional unit and, therefore, as this would be a conversion from a residential use it is considered that Policy H3: Affordable Housing does not apply in this case. Although the previous use was Sui Generis HMO it was effectively operating as one C3 dwelling in residential use, so is considered to comply with the requirements of Policy H3.

CIL

CIL has been paid with respect to the previously approved scheme with a basement, where the new floorspace to create the basement was CIL liable.

The basement is no longer included, but the current proposal includes for additional floorspace within the enlarged dormer ('I' formation). The proposal is CIL liable and chargeable and an informative is included to this effect.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

8. RECOMMENDATION

Application Permitted

Recommended Conditions:

- Approved Plans
- Materials to match
- No Entitlement to Parking Permits
- Cycle Parking (as submitted)
- Refuse and Recycling (as submitted)
- No Change to Unit Mix
- Hard and Soft Landscaping (as submitted)
- Glazing, Ventilation and Other Mitigation in Accordance with Approved Details
- Removal of Permitted Development Rights to Change Use to C4 HMO
- Sustainability Statement Compliance

Informatives:

- Terms and Conditions
- Building Regulations
- Complaints about Construction

- Encroachment
- Parking Permits
- Highways
- Noise Insulation
- CIL
- Positive and Proactive