

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Redlands Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0838 Full planning permission

Address: 41 PRINCES STREET, READING, RG1 4EG

Proposal: Change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) for up to 3 occupants. No external alterations proposed.

Applicant: Tom Shaw

Received date: 24/06/2026

Target Decision date: 19/08/2026

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site contains a two storey terrace house on the eastern side of Princes Street and is located within the Eldon Square Conservation Area. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature and the surrounding dwellings are mainly terraced properties of a similar character. The property is not a listed building and is not in an Article 4 area.



2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for a change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4, containing 3 bedrooms) for up to 3 occupants. No external alterations proposed and no changes are proposed to the building footprint.

A communal kitchen and living room are proposed on the ground floor with a bedroom at the front. A shared bathroom and two additional bedrooms are located on the first floor. The site cannot provide any on-site car parking. The Heritage statement states that the building will be refurbished, an external meter box added and the front door is to be replaced to match the same style and colour.



Fig 1: 30/03 Existing plans
Plans /documents considered

30/04 Proposed Plans

41 Princes Street Planning Statement

30/01 Location and Block Plans

30/02 Site Plan

30/03 Existing plans

30/04 Proposed Plans

CIL

As received 24 June 2026

30/04 Refuse storage Information

Cycle storage provision

30/02 Site plan with bicycle storage

Heritage statement

As received 15 July 2026

Relevant Planning History

None

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation officer - No objection. In relation to the application above, it is noted that the only important alteration would be the replacement of the front entrance door, which would match the material and design as stated in the submitted heritage statement, although there is nothing on the application form about this. According to the latest Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal, this unlisted building is no longer a BTM either.
- RBC Environmental protection - No comments on this, as it is a small HMO.
- HMO team/Private Sector Housing - The Private Sector Housing team have no records concerning or been involved with the above property. We have no objections to change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to House in Multiple Occupation (Use Class C4) for up to 3 occupants.

Note:

Owners should be aware and will need to be informed that a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) (Use Class C4) for up to 3 occupants. Will require a HMO licence under Reading Borough Council's Additional licensing scheme. The scheme is operated by Home Safe and they will need to be contacted directly using the link below:

- Apply for an Additional Licence Under [Reading Borough Council's Additional Licensing Scheme | Home Safe Scheme](#)

- Conservation Area Advisory Committee – No comments have been received at the time of writing this report.

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

A site notice was displayed at the site on 14 July 2026 for the required period and an advert was placed in a local newspaper as the site is located in the Eldon Square Conservation Area. One letter of objection has been received raising concerns regarding additional levels of refuse and odour, a lowering in quality of life for residents, with less parking available, higher utility consumption, potential for more crime, less personable environment, loss of amenity, creates a block of flats on its side, Prince's street is becoming overcrowded and impersonal.

Case officer comment: Material planning considerations will be taken into consideration as detailed below.

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.

4. 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' at paragraph S4. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2026)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS
H8: RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING

Other documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011
Residential Conversions SPD 2023

Eldon Square Conservation Area Appraisal

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 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 a submission version submitted in 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 application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be ‘out of date’. Policies CC2 and CC3 are being updated to reflect developments in climate change and sustainability construction which should be a consideration in the Local Plan review. Policy CC7 reiterates that all development must be of high quality design, to maintain and enhance physical character and context.

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.

5. APPRAISAL

5.1 Land use matters

Residential Conversions SPD Appendix 4 contains a checklist for all developments relating to conversions of a residential dwelling to HMO.

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

Prince’s Street is predominantly residential. There is no information to substantiate that neighbouring properties are existing HMOs. As such, the proposal does not result in the sandwiching of a single occupancy dwelling between 2 HMOs.

*Checklist 3 (H8): 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.*

The site does not fall within an Article 4 Direction area (A4D), which removes permitted development rights for the change of use from a dwellinghouse (C3) to a small HMO (C4). Notwithstanding the proposed 4 person HMO is not considered to impact the existing mixed and sustainable community

through an overconcentration in this area, with 36 Prince's Street the only known HMO within Prince's Street. Other HMO's within a 50m radius include 97 Watlington Street. However, as there are 56 properties within a 50m radius of the site, this is not considered to be near the threshold defined within the SPD. Whilst no demonstrated through a certificate of lawfulness, it would also appear likely that the site would benefit from permitted development rights for the change of use sought under the 'changes of use' Class L of the GPDO.

While the proposal may meet this policy requirement, the SPD also requires all proposals for small HMOs to meet a number of requirements relating to design and residential amenity, as listed in Appendix 4 (Checklist) of the Residential Conversions SPD. These are assessed further in this report.

5.2 Design and character

Policy CC7 sets out requirements for good design. The wording of this policy is greatly expanded within the emerging Local Plan Partial Update. Residential Conversions SPD Appendix 4 Checklist 1 states *"Any external alterations must be carried out sympathetically, respecting the physical character of the area."* Policies EN1, EN3, and EN6 also seek to pay special attention to the impacts with regard to conservation areas/the historic environment.

No external extensions are proposed to the property which is due to be refurbished. The front door is proposed to be replaced with a 'like for like' timber door. As such, the development will not affect the character of the site nor the wider area. The internal alterations are minimal and easily reversible should the property be reversed back to Class C3 use. Overall, there are no concerns to raise regarding the design of the proposal. Refuse is proposed to be placed in the front garden and no plans for a bin store in the front garden have been submitted, bin storage already occurs within this area. Any additional clutter in the front garden would not be considered acceptable within a Conservation area. Cycle storage is proposed in the rear garden and will not be visible within the public realm.

5.3 Residential amenity

Policy CC8 requires all development to not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for future occupants. Policy H10 requires dwellings to be provided with functional private or communal open space. Residential Conversions SPD Appendix 4 Checklist items 5-11 apply.

An objection was received which stated that regarding additional levels of refuse and odour, a lowering in quality of life for residents, with less parking available, higher utility consumption, potential for more crime, less personable environment, loss of amenity, creates a block of flats on its side, Princes street is becoming overcrowded and impersonal. However, a 3 person HMO is generally comparable in scale and residential character to occupation by a single household. The proposed use would remain in residential use, with a limit of 3 persons for the proposed change of use. RBC Environmental Protection has not raised an objection due to the proposed size of the 3 person HMO and no evidence has been provided to evidence unacceptable harm to neighbouring residential amenity through noise, disturbance, or other impacts beyond that which could reasonably arise from occupation by a family household.

The proposed kitchen/dining and lounge areas are in the same original layout of the properties in the surrounding area. With 3 occupants, it is not considered that the use of the communal areas would result in unreasonable levels of noise affecting neighbouring properties.

Similarly, there are no concerns in terms of future occupants. The proposed layout meets national space standards (there is not minimum property size unless a change of use into flats or a large HMO is proposed) and the internal layout of the property is considered acceptable, as is the provision of communal space. Each bedroom has adequate access to natural sunlight/daylight and there are no stacking concerns. The property has an existing garden at the rear which provides adequate outdoor communal amenity space.

5.4. Parking and refuse

Policy TR5 requires all development to provide car parking and cycle parking that is appropriate to the location and accessibility of the site to the sustainable transport facilities in the Borough. Policy CC5 requires development to demonstrate adequate, well-designed spaces for waste storage. Residential Conversions SPD Appendix 4 Checklist items 14-18 apply.

The application site has no off-road parking, and none is proposed. The occupants will not be eligible for parking permits at the site due to the high demand in the area, however, the site is located close to nearby bus stops connecting the area to Reading centre, and as such this arrangement is considered acceptable. A closed and secure cycle store for 2 bikes is proposed in the rear garden, which is considered sufficient provision for the number of occupants. A condition is recommended to secure the details of this store prior to first occupation of the property.

With 3 occupants, it is not considered that there is a need for a dedicated refuse store area or any additional refuse bins. There is sufficient space at the front of the property to keep 2 wheelie bins and a food waste bin off the road. A dedicated refuse store would not fit within this area and would add to the visual clutter in the street.

Overall, there are no transport concerns to raise.

6. CONCLUSION

The proposal has been assessed in line with locally adopted policies and is considered in accordance with those policies.

7. RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION

Recommended conditions:

1. Time limit standard
2. Approved plans
3. Communal rooms to be retained as per plans
4. HMO Cycle storage
5. Parking permits – notification to occupants

Informatives:

1. Terms
2. Building Control
3. Complaints about construction
4. Encroachment
5. HMO Management Plan
6. Parking permits
7. Housing Act
8. Positive and proactive