

PLANNING & DESIGN STATEMENT

66 Erleigh Road, Reading, RG1 5NH

Change of Use/Intensification of Existing HMO to an 8-Person Sui Generis HMO,
together with Single-Storey Rear Extension and Associated Cycle Storage

Applicant	Ms Zahida Parveen
Site	66 Erleigh Road, Reading, RG1 5NH
Prepared by	Arcadia Designs Group Ltd
Drawing set	RERR PL-100, PL-200, PL-201, PL-400 and PL-401
Date	August 2026

1. Executive Summary

This statement supports a full planning application for the change of use/intensification of the existing HMO at 66 Erleigh Road to an 8-person Sui Generis HMO, together with a single-storey rear extension and associated cycle storage.

The property is not a conventional family dwelling being newly converted to an HMO. A Certificate of Lawfulness was granted in 2018 for its existing use as a five-bedroom Class C4 HMO. Following a loft conversion undertaken in approximately 2022, the property came to be occupied by seven persons and the HMO licence was subsequently updated to reflect seven-person occupation. The applicant acknowledges that HMO licensing and planning are separate regimes and that occupation by more than six unrelated persons falls outside Class C4. This application therefore seeks to regularise the current planning position and to permit a maximum of eight occupants.

The proposal is accompanied by a tangible improvement to the standard of accommodation: a modest single-storey rear extension allows the ground floor to be reorganised around a 24.76 m² shared communal kitchen/dining/living area. The scheme also provides eight defined bedrooms, bathroom/WC facilities, eight secure cycle spaces and retains three off-street parking spaces.

The key planning distinction is therefore between the creation of a new HMO and the controlled intensification of an HMO already established at the property. The net operational increase sought over the present seven-person occupation is one additional resident.

2. Site and Surrounding Context

66 Erleigh Road lies within an established residential area of East Reading. The surrounding townscape contains a mix of family housing, private rented accommodation, flats and HMOs. The area is strongly influenced by its proximity to the University of Reading, the Royal Berkshire Hospital and central Reading.

The University of Reading identifies Whiteknights as its main campus and London Road as another of its Reading campuses. The University also advises students to avoid bringing a car to campus and promotes walking, cycling and public transport. The location is therefore well suited to shared student accommodation where day-to-day journeys can be made by sustainable modes.

The application property is used as student HMO accommodation. Student shared housing is an established feature of the wider Redlands/University area and is not, in principle, an unusual form of occupation in this location.

3. Planning and Occupation History

- 2018 - Certificate of Lawfulness PL/18/0768 granted for the existing use of the property as a five-bedroom Class C4 HMO.
- Approximately 2022 - loft conversion undertaken, creating additional accommodation within the roof space.
- Thereafter - the property came to be occupied by up to seven persons and the HMO licence was updated to seven persons.
- 24 June 2026 - Reading Borough Council Planning Enforcement wrote under reference PE/23/0104 (758586), identifying that the seven-person occupation is a large Sui Generis HMO requiring planning permission and inviting an application to regularise the use.
- Current application - regularisation of the large-HMO planning position and increase to a maximum of eight occupants, together with a single-storey rear extension and associated cycle storage.

The applicant does not rely on the HMO licence as granting planning permission. Rather, the licensing history demonstrates that the property has been regulated as an HMO, while the present application addresses the separate land-use planning requirement.

4. Proposed Development

- Change of use/intensification of the existing HMO to an 8-person Sui Generis HMO.
- A maximum of eight occupants.
- Single-storey rear extension of approximately 4 metres in depth.
- Eight individual bedrooms.
- 24.76 m² shared communal kitchen/dining/living area.
- Bathroom and WC facilities distributed through the property.
- Eight secure cycle spaces within the curtilage.
- Retention of three existing off-street parking spaces.
- Retention of usable rear external amenity space.
- Fire-safety measures shown indicatively on the proposed floor plans, including FD30 doors, mains-wired smoke detection, heat detection to the kitchen and a protected escape route.

5. Quality of Accommodation

The proposal does not simply seek to add another occupant to the existing arrangement. The rear extension is principally used to create a materially improved communal environment for all residents.

Room	Approx. area
Bedroom 1	11.26 m ²
Bedroom 2	15.00 m ²
Bedroom 3	7.82 m ²
Bedroom 4	9.66 m ²
Bedroom 5	9.85 m ²
Bedroom 6	8.06 m ²
Bedroom 7	12.47 m ²
Bedroom 8	8.22 m ²
Shared communal area	24.76 m ²

The proposed layout therefore provides identifiable private rooms alongside a substantial dedicated communal area. Detailed compliance with HMO licensing standards, fire safety requirements and Building Regulations will remain subject to the relevant regulatory regimes.

6. Reading Residential Conversions SPD

The adopted Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document (March 2023) is central to the assessment.

The SPD confirms that a large HMO is generally a property occupied by more than six unrelated occupants sharing basic amenities and that planning permission is required for a change to a large HMO.

Within the Article 4 area, the SPD sets a 25% HMO concentration threshold for changes from a dwellinghouse to an HMO, measured within a 50 m radius from the front door. It also explains that the Council uses Environmental Health, Council Tax and planning information to identify HMOs, and that where there is significant doubt a property should not be counted.

Of particular relevance, paragraph 4.4.71 states that when a small HMO changes to a large HMO, or a lawful large HMO is intensified by increasing occupiers without physical extension or external alteration, the threshold is not triggered because the HMO is already established in the street and has no further effect on HMO concentration or the balance and mix of households.

The current proposal includes a physical rear extension and therefore does not seek to rely on paragraph 4.4.71 as an automatic exemption from all concentration assessment. Nevertheless, the policy reasoning behind that paragraph is highly material: 66 Erleigh Road is already an established HMO and permission would not convert another C3 family dwelling or add another HMO property to the street. For completeness and in direct response to the enforcement officer's request, a 50 m HMO context assessment is provided alongside the application.

7. 50 Metre HMO Context Assessment

The 50 m radius should be measured from the front door of 66 Erleigh Road. Any part of a relevant residential building falling within the radius is included in accordance with the SPD methodology. Purpose-built flats and wholly non-residential buildings are treated in accordance with the SPD rules.

The applicant's assessment is deliberately evidence-led. Properties have not been described as HMOs merely because they appear to be student houses or privately rented. Reading Borough Council itself recognises that a completely accurate public count is not always possible and that doubtful properties should not be counted.

Confirmed immediate evidence

63 Erleigh Road is recorded in Reading Borough Council's published HMO register as an eight-person / eight-occupant licensed HMO. It is therefore a particularly relevant example of larger HMO accommodation on Erleigh Road itself.

Wider Erleigh Road planning evidence

40 Erleigh Road is recorded in Council planning evidence under application 190498 as the conversion of a C4 HMO to a seven-bedroom, seven-person Sui Generis HMO. It is relied upon as wider contextual evidence rather than being included in the 50 m calculation unless the measured plan confirms that it falls within the radius.

Other larger HMOs in the wider University/Redlands area

- 9 Upper Redlands Road - 8-person / 8-bedroom Sui Generis HMO.
- 11 Upper Redlands Road - 9-person Sui Generis HMO.
- 12 Christchurch Road - 10-person / 10-bedroom Sui Generis HMO.
- 11 Addington Road - 10-person / 10-bedroom Sui Generis HMO.
- 14 Norris Road - 7-person Sui Generis HMO.

These wider examples are not used to inflate the 50 m percentage. They are cited only to demonstrate that larger HMOs are an established component of the surrounding University/Redlands housing market.

The Council's 2024 parking permit street list is also informative context: for Erleigh Road it identifies several addresses with planning/HMO-related records, including 39, 41, 51 and 66 as having Certificates of Lawful Use. That list is not, by itself, treated as proof that each property is currently an HMO, but it reinforces the need for the Council's own Environmental Health/Council Tax data to be considered alongside the applicant's survey.

8. Loss of Family Housing and Community Balance

Granting permission would not result in the loss of another family dwelling. The HMO use at No. 66 was already established through the 2018 Certificate of Lawfulness.

The proposal therefore differs materially from a new C3-to-HMO conversion. The property already forms part of the existing HMO stock and the current application seeks to bring the planning position into a controlled form while permitting only one additional occupant over the current seven-person operation.

This distinction substantially reduces the proposal's effect on the numerical concentration of HMO properties and on the balance of household types in the street.

9. Neighbouring Residential Amenity

The increase from the present seven-person occupation to eight persons is modest. The use remains residential in character and no commercial or institutional activity is introduced.

The physical extension is single storey and approximately 4 metres deep. Its low scale limits potential effects in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy and overbearing impact. No balcony, raised terrace or elevated external amenity area is proposed.

The improved communal area is also relevant to amenity. Providing a generous shared kitchen/dining/living room gives residents appropriate internal space for social activity and reduces pressure for bedrooms or external areas to function as substitute communal space.

The HMO will remain subject to the applicable management and licensing regimes. The applicant would accept reasonable conditions controlling maximum occupation, retention of cycle storage and refuse arrangements where necessary.

10. Character and Appearance

The principal front elevation remains essentially unchanged, preserving the established appearance of the property within Erleigh Road.

The main physical alteration is confined to the rear. The single-storey extension is subordinate to the host building and of a domestic scale and form. It does not fundamentally alter the character of the dwelling or introduce features that would advertise an intensified use within the street scene.

The proposal therefore responds directly to the enforcement officer's request to demonstrate that the use will not adversely affect the character and appearance of the host property or surrounding area.

11. Parking and Sustainable Transport

The updated site plan retains three existing off-street parking spaces and provides eight secure cycle spaces. The cycle parking is identified to be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the HMO use.

This is particularly appropriate for student accommodation close to the University. The University of Reading advises students to avoid bringing a car to campus and promotes sustainable travel. The proposal therefore combines existing off-street provision with a cycle space for each proposed occupant.

The increase sought is only one occupant above the present seven-person operation, so any additional traffic or parking demand arising specifically from the planning proposal is expected to be limited.

12. Refuse, Recycling and Site Management

The property has sufficient curtilage to accommodate refuse and recycling facilities without obstructing the highway or compromising the principal street frontage. Final bin numbers and management arrangements can be maintained in accordance with the Council's collection requirements and HMO management obligations.

The applicant is willing to provide or accept a proportionate HMO management plan if considered necessary, covering refuse presentation, cycle storage, maintenance of external areas and contact arrangements.

13. Response to Planning Enforcement Letter

1. Appropriateness of the use in this location: The site is already an established lawful C4 HMO, is close to the University of Reading, sits within an area with established HMO/shared accommodation, and is supported by parking and cycle provision. A 50 m evidence plan is submitted.

2. Living conditions of neighbouring properties: The operational increase is one person; the extension is single storey; no raised terrace or balcony is proposed; and the enlarged communal area improves internal management of activity.

3. Character and appearance: The front elevation remains essentially unchanged and the physical works are concentrated at the rear in a subordinate domestic extension.

4. Bins, containers and associated items: The site retains sufficient curtilage for refuse/recycling and provides eight secure cycle spaces within the property.

14. Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposal should be assessed for what it actually changes. It does not introduce a new HMO property into Erleigh Road and does not remove another family dwelling from the local housing stock. The HMO use was established in 2018 and the property is already operating with seven occupants.

The application regularises the large-HMO planning position and seeks a maximum of eight occupants - a net increase of one person over the current operation - while simultaneously delivering a meaningful improvement to the accommodation through the 4 metre rear extension and 24.76 m² shared communal area.

The proposal also retains three off-street parking spaces, provides eight secure cycle spaces, preserves the principal street appearance, retains external amenity space and provides a clear basis for controlled management.

Taken together, these matters demonstrate a proportionate and sustainable intensification of an established HMO. Subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal is considered capable of operating without unacceptable harm to neighbouring amenity, highway conditions, the character of the area or the balance of the local community. Planning permission is therefore respectfully requested.

15. Supporting Evidence and References

- Reading Borough Council, Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document, adopted March 2023.
- Reading Borough Council, published HMO licence register - entry for 63 Erleigh Road (8 persons / 8 occupants).
- Reading Borough Council planning evidence - application 190498, 40 Erleigh Road (C4 HMO to 7-bedroom / 7-person Sui Generis HMO).
- Reading Borough Council planning evidence - larger HMOs at 9 and 11 Upper Redlands Road, 12 Christchurch Road, 11 Addington Road and 14 Norris Road.
- University of Reading, Campus Maps / Visit Us information for Whiteknights and London Road campuses.
- Application drawings RERR PL-100, PL-200, PL-201, PL-400 and PL-401.