

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 3 June 2020

Ward: Abbey

App No.: 191227

Address: 11-13 Waylen Street, Reading

Proposal: Change of use from HMO and supported living accommodation to 2no. 5-bed houses.

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

8-week target expiry: 13/04/2020 extension of time agreed to 6/05/2020

RECOMMENDATION:

GRANT

Subject to the following conditions and informatics to include:

1. Approved plans;
2. Time limit
3. BREEAM - Pre-commencement 'Very Good'
4. BREEAM - Post-construction
5. Removal of PD rights C3 - C4 (Small HMO)
6. Pre-occupation landscaping
7. Obscure Glazing for bathroom windows (to rear)
8. Construction Method Statement
9. Pre-occupation provision of bicycle store
10. Pre-occupation provision of bin storage area

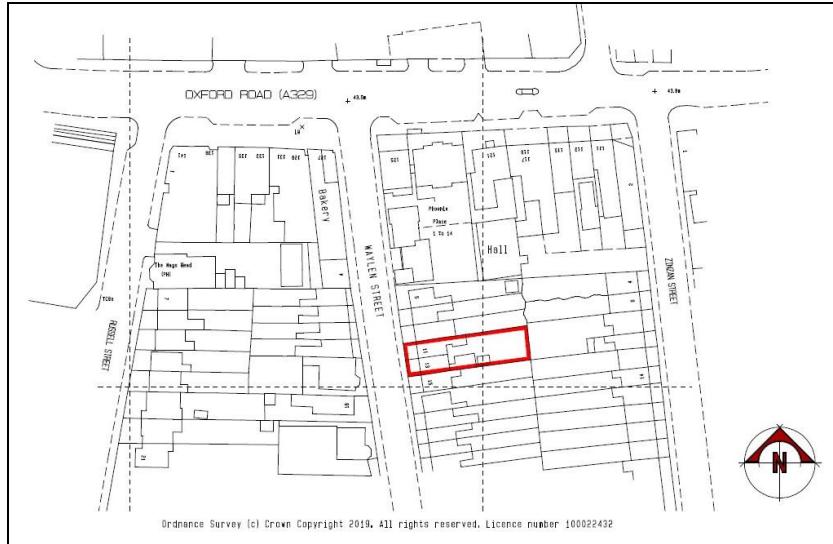
Informatics:

1. Positive and Proactive Statement
2. Terms and conditions
3. Building Control
4. Noise Transmission between residential properties (Building Regulations part E)
5. No burning of waste on site

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site contains two three storey (excluding basement) mid-terraced dwellings (no's 11 and 13 Waylen Street). Each dwelling contains a single storey rear extension, a first floor outrigger style extension. No.13 also includes an existing outbuilding. The buildings were last in use as a large House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for supported living.
- 1.2 The application site is located within the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area. Specifically, the site lies within Area 3 and is noted as a building of townscape merit.

Site Location Plan



2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal includes the change of use of the building from a large HMO (for supported living) to 2 x 5-bedroom dwellings (C3 use class). No alterations to the front façade are proposed, the outbuilding at no.13 is proposed to be removed, and a boundary fence between the properties is proposed to return the gardens to separate use.
- 2.2 Submitted Plans and Documentation:
Drawing No: 19/002/02A - Proposed reinstatement to 2 no separate dwellings
Drawing No: 19/002/01 - Existing plans

2.3 Community Infrastructure levy (CIL):

In relation to the community infrastructure levy, the applicant has duly completed a CIL liability form with the submission. The application site was last in use within 4 years, as such would not be liable for CIL.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 12-00144-VARIAT (120800) - Continual use as a professionally staffed supported living unit without complying with condition 4 (professionally staffed 24-hours), condition 5 (number of permitted residents) and condition 9 (provision of off site parking spaces) of planning permission 06/00636/REG3
- 3.2 06-00636-REG3 (061052) - Change of use from separate household to a professionally staffed supported living unit

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

- 4.1 Transport - No objections subject to conditions and informatives.
- 4.2 Environmental protection officers - No objections subject to conditions and informatives.

Public

- 4.3 A site notice was placed at the site, and letters sent to adjoining properties. No comments have been received at time of writing.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 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) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

- 5.2 For this Local Planning Authority the development plan is now in one document - the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019), which fully replaces the Core Strategy, the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Reading Central Area Action Plan. The relevant policies are:

- 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
- 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
- TR5 Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging
- CR2 Design in central Reading
- CR3 Public realm in central Reading
- CR6 Living in Central Reading

- 5.3 Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

- Affordable Housing (2013)
- Design Guide to House Extensions (2003)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
- Planning Obligations Under Section 106 (2015)
- Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

6. APPRAISAL

The main matters to be considered are:

- **Principle of development**
- **Design considerations and effect on character**
- **Impact on residential amenity**
- **Standard of Residential Accommodation**

- Transport
- Affordable Housing
- Other Matters
- Equalities impact

Principle of development

6.1 Policy OU1 (New and existing community facilities) states that:

“Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Proposals for on-site intensification of important facilities, such as schools and healthcare uses, will be supported, subject to other policies in the plan. Proposals for additional development for further and higher education will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it would not lead to a material increase in the need for student accommodation, or that it will be supported by an appropriate increase in existing or planned student accommodation.”

- 6.2 The principle of the loss of the existing use, has been carefully considered. The building is presently un-occupied and was last in use as a Sui Generis HMO for supported living. The supporting text within Policy OU1 (Paragraph 4.7.2) states that community facilities encompass “youth and community centres” such as this. Accordingly, as the site is considered a community use under Policy OU1, its loss is resisted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain the facility. In addition, Policy CC9 seeks mitigation where development would have an adverse impact in terms of increasing the need for additional community facilities. Furthermore, Paragraph 70 of the NPPF states that decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services.
- 6.3 The applicant (The Council) has provided a statement to explain that the property is surplus to The Council’s requirements for this style of accommodation, including the re-modelling of supported accommodation services taking into account the following considerations:

- A review of services in accordance with national best practice resulting in the decision to re-focus on emergency and higher level provision within (what we now refer to as) Homelessness Support Services including introducing a hub, emergency bed spaces and assessment bed spaces at Willow House since 1st September 2018
- Services that provide 9 - 5 on-site support are an older model of housing-related support delivery that is not necessarily cost effective or in line with best practice
- A review of locational suitability and continual incidents of anti-social behaviours on Waylen Street where there was another supported accommodation property on this road and the borough’s drug and alcohol service on the corner of Oxford Road/Waylen Street
- The property being included as an accommodation option within the tender for new Homelessness Support Services; however, the successful tenderer chose not to use it in the delivery of recommissioned services deciding to utilise their own or other properties to meet their service needs

- 6.4 In addition, the following supported accommodation bed spaces/support services have been commissioned in Reading to meet this particular group's needs:
- Launchpad Reading - 100 bed spaces for people transitioning from the need for a 24/7 environment into independent accommodation (same level/amount of support provided at 11 - 13 Waylen Street, but remotely rather than on site)
 - Floating support - cross-tenure for between 100 - 130 individuals each quarter to support people with sustaining accommodation in the community

- 6.5 In light of this additional information secured and the absence of any public representations against the loss of the existing use, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the facility is needed and would conflict with Policy OU1. This weighs in favour of the proposed change of use and the principle of development is thereby accepted.

Design Considerations and effect on character

- 6.6 The proposed development is located within the Russell Street/Castle Hill conservation area. The proposed development does not include any external changes to the front of the buildings, other than removal of the temporary security measures installed over the front doors and basement doors. Also, the boundary treatments are proposed to be retained as is, which is considered acceptable.

Mix of uses

- 6.7 Waylen Street has been subject to substantial change over time, where a number of large properties along the street have been changed to flats or houses in multiple occupation. An assessment has been carried out based on the Council's address data, and HMO register, and has found that within 50m of the property, are 31 buildings which would have originally been single dwelling houses. Of the 31, 16 have been converted to flats (51%), and 6 are registered as HMO's (19.4%). As such, the concentration of flats and HMO's within the immediate vicinity has resulted in the significant loss of family housing. Policy H8 (Residential conversions) and the supporting text (para. 4.4.60) "*Conversions, either individually or cumulatively, can also have a harmful impact on the character of the area through unduly diluting mixed and sustainable communities.*" As such, in this instance, it is considered appropriate, to secure by condition, that permitted development rights for change of use to a small HMO (class C4) be removed from the two properties.

Impact on residential amenity

- 6.8 Policy CC8 seeks to protect the amenity of surrounding occupiers whilst Policy EN16 seeks to ensure development is not harmful in terms of pollution.

- 6.9 The number of occupiers of the two flats would be unlikely to be any greater than that of the proposed dwellings. It is therefore considered that there would be no negative impact as a result of the proposed development.

Standard of Residential Accommodation

- 6.10 The proposed 2 x 5-bed, 3-storey dwelling would each exceed the internal space requirements as outlined within policy H5. As such would be

acceptable in this regard.

- 6.11 The proposal would return the dwellings to their original state in terms of sub-division of the rear garden and remove the structure to the rear of no.13. The resulting outdoor space would be appropriate and commensurate with other gardens in the area.
- 6.12 Appropriate sound insulation between dwellings is required through building regulations, as such no planning conditions are required to secure this.

Transport matters

- 6.13 The development, as proposed, is for a car-free development. The area is predominantly terraced properties, with limited off-street parking. The site is located within close proximity to the town centre, high frequency bus routes, and the Reading Central Station. The provision of a car-free development in this location is considered wholly appropriate and is in-line with the aspirations of the Council's climate emergency declaration.

Affordable Housing

- 6.14 In accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) a contribution towards affordable housing is not required as the conversion of these properties to single dwellings does not require additional floor space to be built.

Other Matters

CIL

- 6.15 The property has been in use within 4-years, as such would not trigger a CIL liability.

Sustainability

- 6.16 The proposed development would require measures to address Policy CC1, and the Council's climate emergency declaration. The conversion would be required to meet the BREEAM standards as they relate to conversions, and conditions as outlined above are recommended in this regard.

Equalities Impact

- 6.17 When determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the 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.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and supplementary planning documents. The recommendation is shown above.

Case Officer: Mr Anthony Scholes

8. PLANS

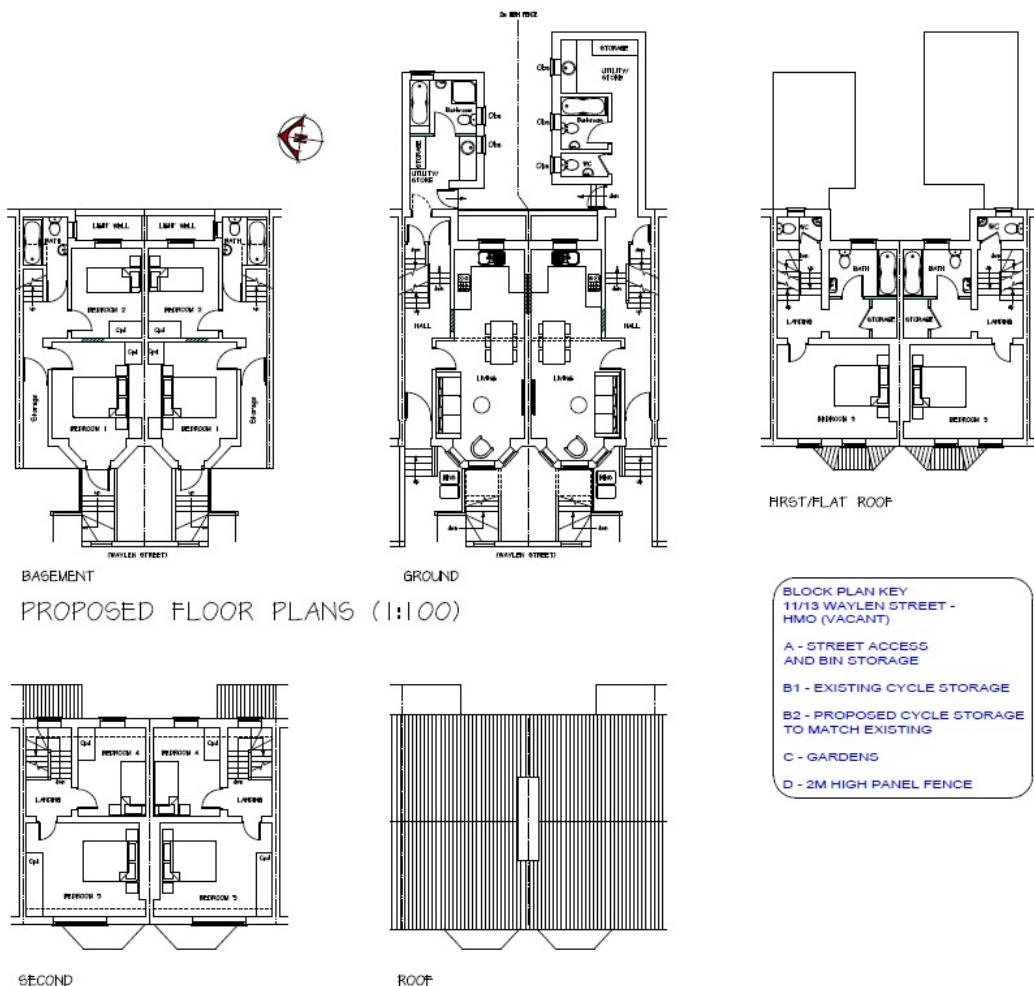


Figure 1 - Proposed floor plans

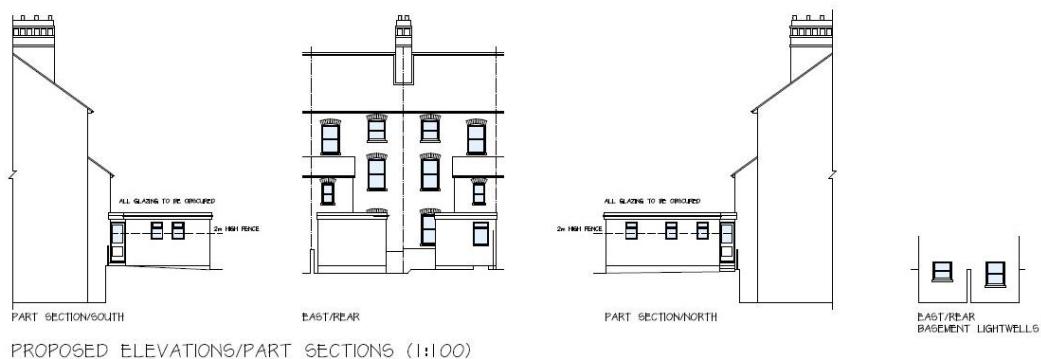


Figure 2 - Proposed rear elevations