

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 9th January 2019

ITEM NO. 13
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Ward: Redlands

Application No.: 180591

Address: Mulberry House, 1a Eldon Road, Reading, RG1 4DJ

Proposal: Demolition of Mulberry House (Class D1) and erection of part 3, part 5 storey building providing 7 (3x1 & 4x2-bed) residential units (Class C3), 5 parking spaces, landscaping and associated works.

Recommendation:

As in main report, barring:

- the date for the legal agreement to be completed by being **23rd January 2019** (rather than the 11th July 2018 date specified in error in the main report)
- An additional informative is recommended stating that the applicant is strongly advised to liaise with nearby occupiers/landowners prior to the submission of details for conditions 4 (demolition & construction method statement) and 8 (waste management plan).

1. Further public consultation responses

1.1 Subsequent to the publication of the main report, 8 further objections have been received from nearby occupiers (7 from 'new' respondents and 1 from an individual who has commented previously). The further responses are from: properties in Hanover House - 1 at 2nd floor level, 1 at 3rd floor, 1 at 6th floor and 3 from unspecified occupiers; 2 from Eldon Road. A further response has also been received from the Hanover House Residents Management Company. Many of the same issues (already set out at section 4) of the main report are raised, but are detailed below for completeness:

1.2 Design / Impact on the Conservation Area

- This will be an even worse eyesore than Hanover House currently is.
- The design looks totally not in keeping with the look and feel of the road and will eliminate what is an attractive grass lawn area in front of the current dentist practice.
- The proposed property will materially worsen the appearance of the road. Given its visual and historical value, only more modest period-style properties should be considered for new construction. Please do not proceed with this awful design.
- The proposed concrete minimalist design for the new Mulberry House could not be more offensive to the historic Victorian properties which sit on Eldon Road and Eldon Square.
- A conservation area is supposed to be enhanced and protected. Not at constant risk of cheap infill property development opportunities for profit.
- 5 storey structure cannot be considered in keeping with the period properties.

- The fact that it sits next to Hanover House should not be used as an excuse to warrant the construction of concrete-based block style building in a conservation area.
- Please stop this monstrosity from going ahead and reconsider a design which is more in keeping and respectful to the area.

1.3 Amenity

- The lengthy construction works will be very painful for the occupiers of surrounding properties. Another objector also mentions this and the need to revise for university exams.
- It would be awful to have the minimal amount of sunlight Hanover House flats get limited even further due to this building. Another occupier of a third floor flat on the south side of Hanover House says it will block all the sunlight to their flat.

1.4 Transport

- Building a property of this size will only cause additional traffic problems in the area
- The Council would add to the problem by issuing additional parking permits to the new residents and their guests.
- New tenants will presumably try and take advantage of parking at Hanover House.

1.5 Procedural issues regarding being informed about the proposals being considered by the Planning Applications Committee:

- Given the incredibly short notice of this news I find it staggering to receive this over the festive period.
- This manner of process is simply unfair, rushed and not in keeping of looking after the current residents of this area.
- Dissatisfaction that this has taken place over Christmas and New year, when most residents are on holiday

1.6 Issues raised by the further response of the Hanover House Residents Management Company (HHRMC):

- Serious concerns regarding some of the statements made by the applicant regarding the waste management and refuse collection. Consider that such matters should be resolved via a pre-commencement condition, rather than the recommended pre-occupation condition. Such an approach in effect allows construction to be completed before any serious thought is given to how the waste collection will work for Mulberry House.
- Issues around access during demolition and construction will be resolved / covered by the pre-commencement demolition & construction method statement. HHRMC assume that either the applicant or RBC will be required to liaise with us before the method statement is approved - it would be better if this was to be formally included in the conditions.
- Serious doubts regarding the applicant's statements concerning their rights of access through the car park.

1.7 Officer response: As per the main report (sections 6ii, 6v, 6vi & ix in particular) the proposals are considered to be appropriate subject to conditions. An additional informative is recommended in relation to

encouraging the applicant to liaise with nearby occupiers/landowners prior to the submission of details for conditions 4 (demolition & construction method statement) and 8 (waste management plan). Regarding procedural concerns about being informed about the proposals being considered by the Planning Applications Committee over Christmas/New Year, this followed standard protocol on such matters.

Case Officer: Jonathan Markwell