

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 01/09/21

Application No: 210585/FUL

Address: 260 Shinfield Road

Proposal: Conversion of store to 1x1 bed flat, with various elevational alterations and associated hard and soft landscaping

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

Site Description and Surrounding Area

260 Shinfield Road comprises a two storey detached building, located within Shinfield Road District Centre. A long single storey extension projects to the rear. The ground floor is in active retail use. Storage for the retail use is located within the rear extension. The upper floor comprises a three bed flat, with independent access from the side of the building. To the front of the site is a forecourt, with four parking spaces attributed to the retail use. A narrow access, between the side elevations of no's. 260 & 258, leads to a rear yard. The surrounding area comprises a mix of commercial and residential uses. The site straddles the boundary with Wokingham Borough Council.

Proposal

The proposal is for the conversion of part of the ground floor from storage attributed to the retail use, to a one bed flat (approximately 68sqm). Elevational alterations including the installation of windows and doors are proposed to facilitate the conversion. The rear yard would be partially landscaped, and two vehicle parking spaces provided.

Plans Considered

The agent supplied the following, received 15/04/21:

Supporting Letter

Planning Statement

Drawing No: BC/3 - Site Location and Block Plan

Drawing No: BC/1 - Existing Floor Plans

Drawing No: BC/4 - Existing Elevations

Drawing No: BC/5A - Proposed Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: BC/2A - Proposed Elevations

Subsequently the agent supplied the following, received on 08/07/21:

Affordable Housing Statement

On 22/09/21 the agent was advised that Affordable Housing Statement did not make clear whether an affordable housing contribution was proposed. Clarification was sought, either in the form of valuations or viability assessment. Further concerns were raised with the proposal regarding the amenity of future occupiers, transport matters and landscaping matters.

The requirement for an affordable housing contribution was reiterated to the agent on 19/10/22. Despite further correspondence with the agent, including further reiterating

the affordable housing requirements on 22/11/21 and 13/04/22, no additional information has been supplied. The decision has been taken to determine the application on the basis of information supplied to date.

Relevant Planning History

092032/PRE - Change of use from retail to veterinary surgery. Erection of single storey rear extension following demolition of existing - Withdrawn 12/03/09

201333/ADJ - Change of use of ground floor store room to self-contained flat, with bicycle shed and bin store - Observations sent 13/10/20

The site straddles the boundary with Wokingham Borough Council. Planning permission has been granted for the development subject of this application, by Wokingham Borough Council under their application ref: 202437.

Consultation Responses

Neighbouring owners and occupiers at 258 Shinfield Road, and 2 & 3 Lacewood Gardens were consulted by letter. A site notice was displayed. No letters of representation were received.

Wokingham Borough Council

Raised no objection to the proposals.

Reading Borough Transport Development Control

Advised that the development would be required to provide two off-road parking spaces. Sought clarification on the existing access and bin storage/collection.

Reading Borough Natural Environment

Raised no objection to the proposals, subject to details of landscaping and tree planting being secured by condition.

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.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

National Planning Policy Framework

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC1 - Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy CC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC3 - Adaption to Climate Change

Policy CC5 - Waste Minimisation and Storage

Policy CC6 - Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity

Policy EN12 - Biodiversity and the Green Network

Policy EN14 - Trees, Hedges and Woodland

Policy EN15 - Air Quality

Policy EN18 - Flooding and Drainage

Policy H1 - Provision of Housing

Policy H2 - Density and Mix

Policy H3 - Affordable Housing

Policy H5 - Standards for New Housing

Policy H10 - Private and Communal Outdoor Space

Policy TR3 - Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy TR5 - Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Policy RL1 - Network and Hierarchy of Centres

Policy RL3 - Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (2011)

Appraisal

Principle of development

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The general principle of provision of new housing in this location would align with the broad objectives of Policy H1.

The loss of storage space attributed with the retail use at the front of the building, to facilitate the proposal must also be considered. While the site is located within a District Centre, the loss of this storage space would not compromise the ongoing, viable use of the retail unit, with the vitality of the District Centre being maintained. The broad principle for the residential development is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policies CC6, H1 and RL1. The overall acceptability of the proposals will be dependant on other policy consideration, as discussed below.

Affordable housing

Policy H3 of the Local Plan requires residential development to make an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing. The policy states that on sites of 1-4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough. In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure an acceptable contribution towards the provision of affordable housing, the proposal fails to contribute adequately to the housing needs of Reading Borough. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy H3 of the Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD.

Design and impact on the character of the area

To facilitate the proposed conversion, minor elevational alterations are proposed. These include rendering external brickwork and the replacement/addition of fenestration appropriate for a residential use. The alterations are deemed to be acceptable, with no harm caused to the character and appearance of the building in accordance with Policy CC7.

Impact on neighbouring amenity

While the proposal would result in a more intensive use of the site, this is not considered to cause significant harm to neighbouring residential amenities. While some of the proposed fenestration would be located to the side elevation facing no. 262, it would be at the ground floor and largely obscured by existing close-boarded boundary fencing.

Amenity of future occupiers

The proposal would provide a good sized flat, which accords with the space standards as set out in Policy H5. While each habitable room would have an external window, concerns were raised during the course of the application with regard to the outlook from the bedroom window in close proximity to the existing boundary fence. While the outlook from this window would be limited, no harm significant to warrant a reason for refusal has been identified. Adequate outdoor amenity space would also be provided.

Transport and landscaping matters

Two vehicle parking spaces, bicycle and bin storage and an area of soft landscaping has been proposed to the rear of the site, which accords with the broad policy objectives. Slight concerns were raised during the course of the application regarding the access to the rear of the site and lack of tree planting. Were officers minded to recommend approval of this application, further information would be sought.

Conclusion

Due to the lack of a completed affordable housing contribution, the proposed development conflicts with the identified policy and guidance. Several attempts have been made resolve this matter during the course of the application. As no further information has been forthcoming, the decision has been taken to refuse the application.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE