



PRE-APPLICATION

LEVEL 2 ADVICE

**Planning & Building Control
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU**

Website: www.reading.gov.uk

"Without Prejudice" Advice

The pre-app advice given is based on the information provided by the applicant and current records and policies but please note that this advice is given on a "without prejudice" basis and does not guarantee the outcome of a formal application when submitted. National and local policies may change or material considerations may arise from formal consultations.

Level 2 Pre-Application Advice

Site Address - 2-4 Alexandra Road, Reading, RG1 5PE

Reference - 230084

Proposal - Change of use from Day Care Centre to GP Surgery

Case Officer - Thomas Bradfield

Date - 19/04/2023

Site

The site is on the western side of Alexandra Road and contains a two storey property which presents as a pair of semi detached properties, but has most recently been in use as one building as a Day Care and Respite Centre. The site has been vacant since 2019. The building has been significantly extended to the rear at single storey level. To the north is the rear of the properties facing onto London Road, including a Dentists at number 74. To the south, east and west are primarily residential properties of various types.

The site is within the following designations:

- Air Quality Management Area
- Alexandra Road Conservation Area

The site was granted permission for the day care centre through application ref. 090081, which at the time was considered to fall within Class D1. Given the changes to the Use Classes Order, this use now falls within Class E(f). The original day care centre was in operation only during the day and was not residential in nature.

Proposal

The proposal seeks to change the use of the building from the Day Care/Respite Centre to a Doctors Surgery.

Assessment

The proposal seeks to change the use of the site from a Day Care Centre (Use Class E(f)) to a Doctor's Surgery (Use Class E(e)). As both uses fall within Class E, this would usually constitute Permitted Development, and planning permission would not be required. However, condition 3 of planning permission ref. 090081 states the following:

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“The premises shall be used for a day care facility only and for no other purpose that may fall within the same Use Class (being “D1 Non-Residential Institutions” of the Schedule to the Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987), or in any provision equivalent to that Use Class in any statutory instrument revoking or re-enacting that Order with or without modification.”

Given this condition, the freedom to change the use of the property has been restricted, and planning permission would be required for any change of use away from the Day Centre use.

Principle

Local Plan Policy OU1 supports the provision of community facilities, including healthcare uses, where they are appropriately located. It also resists the redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses.

The proposals would replace an existing community facility with an alternative community facility. Although both uses are classed as community facilities, they are fundamentally different, and so an application would have to clearly demonstrate that there is no longer a need for the day centre use in this location through marketing evidence. Given the site has been vacant for four years, this should be achievable. Providing information demonstrating that the previous use is no longer required is provided as part of the application, the proposals would meet the aims of Policy OU1 and would therefore be considered acceptable in principle.

Transport

Local Plan Policy TR3 seeks to ensure that proposals have an acceptable impact on the safety, congestion and environment of the transport network. Policy TR5 seeks to ensure that development provides appropriate levels of car and cycle parking, including disabled parking and electric vehicle charging points.

The site is within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). Permit holders are able to park in bays at any time, with non-permit holders able to pay to park for up to two hours between 8am and 5:30pm. Given the surgery is proposed to be open between 8am and 6:30pm, visitors to the surgery could struggle to park after 5:30pm. Details regarding how this would be managed should be provided as part of the application.

The Parking Standards and Design SPD require 1.5 parking spaces per consulting room and 1 parking space per GP. The proposal does not include a ground floor plan or site plan and does not state the number of GPs as proposed. Appropriate, on site, disabled spaces in accordance with the Parking Standards and Design SPD should be provided. One parking space for every ten provided should include an

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active charging point. Sufficient plans and information should be submitted as part of the application to demonstrate that these requirements are met.

Secure, covered cycle parking should be provided in a convenient location within the site. The standards require 1 space per 2 staff and 1 per consulting room. The cycle parking should reflect the short stay nature for visitors with longer stay options for staff. This should all be indicated on submitted plans.

Bin storage should be located within 10m from the access point of the site. This should be indicated on submitted plans.

Air Quality

Local Plan Policy EN15 requires development to have regard to the need to improve air quality and reduce the effects of poor air quality.

The site is within the Air Quality Management Area. Given this, an Air Quality Management Plan should be submitted as part of the application which details mitigation measures.

Design & Heritage

No significant external changes are proposed, and so it is not considered that this would be an issue.

Neighbours

Given the nature of the use and the proposed hours, it is not considered that the proposal would have any significant impact on neighbour's living conditions.

Conclusion

The proposal would likely be acceptable in principle if it can be demonstrated that the existing use is no longer required. Further information would be required with regards the nature and intensity of the use, parking, layout, waste and recycling storage and air quality. Providing that the full application addresses these issues, the proposal should be considered acceptable.

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