

Design & Access Statement on behalf of

Date. Dec 2022

1.0.0. The site & its surroundings

The Building consists a 4 storey plus basement in a prominent location on the corner of Market Place & Friar Street in Reading Town Centre. It sits opposite the Grade I Listed Church of St Laurence in a medieval sector of the town, an area containing a large number of historic buildings. The area is part of the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area. The building is Grade II List entry no. 1113536

1.1.0. The Proposal

The proposal is to make use of the upper floors by converting the vacant offices (since September 2022) into 6no 1 bed flats, with minimum external alterations.

Proposed first floor

Flat 1- 41.4sqm 1 bed 1p

Flat 2- 43.78sqm 1 bed 1P

Second Floor-

Flat 3- 41.4sqm 1 bed 1P

Flat 4- 43.78sqm 1 bed 1P

Third Floor-

Flat 5- 41.4sqm 1 bed 1P

Flat 6- 43.78sqm 1 bed 1P

0 The Design

The design takes into consideration the existing, adjacent buildings (some of which are listed and fall within the conservation area) in regard to their scale and form but will be contrasted in style.

The new proposal is a contemporary and modern design, utilising the original footprint of the building, but increasing the overall height. The proposal will be sympathetic to the existing street scene, and will help lead the way in future designs.

At present, the internal layout has been designed for office use. This has now remained vacant for some considerable time.

The proposal is to convert the ground & first floors of the existing building to provide 8 x 1 bed flats which all meet the national Standards. This is a more efficient and effective use of the building which has been vacant for some considerable time.

The layout and configuration of the new flats will provide good size residential spaces and will contribute to the renovation of the street scene.

1.2.0. The Scale

The scale of the building is not changing.

1.3.0. Landscaping

There is no scope for landscaping

1.4.0. Bins

The applicant will enter into a contract with a private collector or Council to pick up plastic bags on an agreed day once a week, as there is no area within the site to accommodate a bin store.

1.5.0. Cycle Store

There is no space for a cycle store, there is space within the flats for a Brompton folding cycle

1.6.0. Parking

As the building is located within the town centre, there is no off street parking available, however the building is very close to all local facilities, bus services & the train station.

1.7.0. Appearance

The external appearance of the building will remain unaltered.

1.8.0. Ecology

As the alterations only involve a re fitting out of the internal areas, we do not believe there is any requirement for any Ecology reports.

1.9.0. H2: DENSITY AND MIX 73

The appropriate density of residential development has been informed by:

- the character and mix of uses of the area in which it is located;
- its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport;
- the need to achieve high quality design;
- the need to maximise the efficiency of land use; and
- the need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.

With the significant need for housing in Reading and surrounding areas, it is important that efficient use is made of the land that is available to boost the delivery of new homes. The current proposal will deliver on this requirement while respecting the surrounding locally built vernacular.

Providing additional housing close to town centre in a highly sustainable location is seen as a good use of the site:

“4.4.10 A very substantial amount of Reading’s housing need will need to be met in the town centre due to the availability of sites”

In applying this policy, any room designated as a bedroom should comply with the criteria from the national space standards

We have proposed 6 flats for the first & second & third floors.

Owing to the size of the building 1 bedroom flats only are able to be designed within the first, second & third floors. Providing 1 no larger flat per floor will not be viable.

H8: RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS

The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location and materials.

The renovation enables the affordable maintenance of the property, Providing a sustainable economic model for the building’s future.

The proposal would not unduly harm the sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing, as the proposal provides additional, much needed accommodation.

Adverse impacts to surrounding properties is minimized as the proposal does not exceed its existing footprint. The change in Class E (offices) to C3 (dwellinghouses) would not cause increased disturbance.

- **H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE**

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Owing to the fact that the building is Grade II Listed & its location within the town centre, there is no scope for adding balconies or altering sash windows for French doors etc.

1.10.0. Sustainability

The building's envelope will be upgraded to provide an EPC rating of at least C.

We will achieve at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rate over the target emission rate, as defined in the 2013 Building Regulations. Although this target is not specifically required for this project.

1.11.0. Noise & Pollution

Located within the Reading Air Quality Management Area, mitigation elements will be provided in the form of heat recovery units, with special attention given to the windows on the frontage overlooking Chatham Street. The relevant reports have been undertaken & will be submitted very shortly.

1.12.0. Section 106 Contributions

The applicant is willing to enter a 106 legal agreement & pay the Council's reasonable fees.

The application will attract an affordable liability amounting to 10% of the GDV. 2no valuations are being obtained & will be submitted shortly.

1.13.0. Conclusion

The proposed building has been sensitively designed in all aspects, to provide good quality accommodation. With good links to the town centre, this is an area very suitable for residential accommodation.

The development will blend with and complement the local character, whilst comprising a high-quality form of development which would stand the test of time; Positively contributing

to the local character and aesthetics of the wider locality through a sensitive design approach which seeks to successfully and sympathetically integrate with the wider urban environment; Further enhancing the locality.

All aspects have been thought of in this design to ensure an excellent design has been proposed to pro long the useful life of this important Grade II Listed building.