

CO-OPERATIVE MEETING ROOMS, ROWDELL DRIVE, READING, RG2 8DW

Planning Statement

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PROJECT INFORMATION

Project: Estate Office - Rowdell Drive, Reading RG2 8DW

Job No: 22079

Client: Co-op Homes

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VERSION HISTORY

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1. Introduction

The site is situated in the south region of Reading Borough on a residential street. On the site sits a single storey detached property currently being used as a meeting room. The current use class for the building is E(g)(i), previously used as office space. The building consists of a meeting room to the south west corner of the property, a single WC to the south east corner of the property, a utilities room which stores hot water tank to the east of the property and a large meeting room/kitchenette to the north of the property.

Co-op Homes the owner of the property, is a social housing provider which is seeking to convert the commercial premises into a single bedroom dwellinghouse.

The proposal is to utilise the south west meeting room as a bedroom, removal of the hot water tank and installation of an energy efficient combi-boiler, allowing the owner to demolish the partition between the utility room and WC creating an accessible bathroom, the northern meeting room will be utilised as an open plan living room/kitchen. It is proposed to replace the large window to the north west of the living area with double French doors (width to match existing), introduce a second window (frosted) to the north east of the property and two new skylights symmetrically spaced above the open plan living area. It is also proposed to install timber fencing (to match the existing) around the west and south perimeter of the property.

2. Context

This planning statement seeks to assess the proposed development against the National Planning Policy Framework and Reading Borough Council's Local Planning Policy where applicable.

3. Sustainable Development

There has been a recent shift for demand of commercial space, the demand has significantly reduced post pandemic while the demand for housing is high and far from being met. The meeting room is an underutilised brownfield site. Investing in brownfield development projects reduces the need for greenfield development, helping to protect wildlife and reduce energy emissions. We believe the proposal to convert an underutilised meeting room to a dwellinghouse that will be used as social housing, with the proposed footprint remaining the same, is a form of sustainable development as described by policies in the NPPF and CC1 of the local Plan, which aims to promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban development through the efficient use of existing built resources.

4. Sustainable Design

The proposed changes to convert the commercial space into a dwelling house are minimal, this will overall reduce the amount of material used in the development, minimise waste, keep vehicle traffic at a minimum; thus, overall keeping any environmental impact of the conversion to a minimum.

To introduce more natural daylight into the living space and kitchen, the proposal includes replacing the window to the northwest of the property with double glazed double French doors, installing 2 no. skylights above the open plan living/kitchen and creating a new window opening to the northeast of the property. An internal daylight and sunlight study has been carried out to ensure the dwelling benefits from ample natural light, the assessment shows that all habitable rooms that were assessed would satisfy the BRE guidelines for daylight illuminance and sunlight exposure guidelines.

To aid with reducing the future energy consumption and carbon footprint of the proposed dwelling house, the proposal is to replace the existing hot water storage tank with a energy efficient combi boiler, where new apertures are being formed they will be double glazed, LED light fittings will be installed throughout the dwelling. A bicycle storage rack will also be installed along the gated eastern elevation, promoting green travel.

To increase water efficiency the kitchen and bathroom will be fitted with tap aerators and water-efficient showerheads to reduce usage, when considering fitted appliances, high water efficiency ratings will be reviewed. Rainwater storage for external use will be considered in the future.

5. Refuse Storage

In keeping with the refuse arrangement for the rest of the residential road, there will be 2 no. wheelie bins (for general waste and recycling) stored to the right-hand side of the entrance door. the proposal does not seek to change the current arrangement.

6. Vehicle Parking

The proposal does not include provisions for off-street parking of a vehicle. Currently vehicles are parked on the public road outside of the meeting room and surrounding properties. There are currently no parking restrictions on Rowdell Drive. The proposal is to continue to park on the road outside the property.