

Ms Connie Davis
Reading Borough Council
Planning Department
Reading Borough Council Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Email to: Connie.Davis@reading.gov.uk

Our ref: APL-269

Your ref: 220721

Date: 18th July 2022

Dear Ms Davies,

72a Admirals Court, Reading, RG1 6SP ('the Site') - Planning reference: 220721

Planning Representations

We write with reference to the above planning application and the neighbour representations that have been made on the application. We will seek to address the matters covered by the representations under the headings below.

Many of the points raised have already been addressed within the submitted Planning Statement and wider submission, therefore we do not seek to duplicate these matters within this letter.

Impact on neighbouring Amenity

As noted above, points regarding the impacts on the amenity of neighbouring properties are covered within the submitted Planning Statement and therefore are not repeated here.

The Planning Inspector in the appeal for the construction of 2 additional storeys at the Site (appeal reference APP/E0345/W/21/3277610, RBC reference 201480/FPA) noted that, the proposals would '*substantially increase the height of the existing building*' and that the impacts to '*the lower level flats the building would be dominant and overbearing*'. The new proposal significantly reduces the impacts noted by the Inspector, by reducing the height of the building by an entire floor. It is also noted that the windows serving the flats closest on the lower floors are secondary bedrooms,

with these flats being triple aspect and therefore the impact on the living conditions of current and future occupiers is not material.

In assessing impacts in relation to overlooking for the 2 additional floors the Inspector accepted that there may be '*some new impacts*', but that given the existing layout of the flats, they were '*satisfied that this would not amount to an adverse impact on privacy.*' Given the current proposals are for a smaller scheme, with fewer windows, the impacts on overlooking cannot be said to be greater than the Inspector assessed in the appeal. Furthermore, no issues were raised by the Inspector with regard to flats 13-18, which are located diagonally northeast, as can be seen of the submitted site location plan.

Amenity for future residents

Points have been made regarding the ground floor flats meeting the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSSs) – no alterations to these flats are proposed as part of the development. They should not be considered as part of this application.

Issues raised regarding the use of the 2nd floor flat's studies as bedrooms are purely speculation. Furthermore, neither study would be large enough to accommodate a bedroom being less than the 7.5m² set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards.

The rear amenity space is policy compliant, respecting the size and character of similar spaces in the vicinity. An objection has been raised regarding Coley Park being further than suggested in the Planning Statement. Taken from Google Maps, Coley Park is a 3-minute walk from the Site and is therefore considered to be in sufficient proximity to be used by the residents.

Existing Building

The size of the existing building has been raised as a concern. There are no material differences between what has been previously approved and what has been built on Site. This matter has never been raised as an issue by the Council, or Planning Inspectors, in previous submissions.

Highways Impacts

Highways impacts are discussed in detail within the application submission, with a supporting Transport Technical Note. It is highlighted however, that in the appeal the Planning Inspector noted that car ownership for the flats was likely to be low, that there was no evidence that the area was under parking stress and that there was no evidence that the 6 flats proposed would exacerbate an existing problem. The current proposal is for 3 fewer flats than the appeal. Therefore, the impacts would be less than the Inspector assessed in the appeal, where he deemed the highways impacts to be acceptable. Furthermore, the Site is located in a sustainable location with good access to alternatives to the private car. It is precisely the type of location where parking can, and should, be constrained to assist the Council in delivering against their air quality and sustainability policies.

Design

The design of the proposals would be entirely in keeping with the surrounding blocks in terms of height, mass and finishes – a breakdown of the surrounding building heights is included in the Planning Statement submitted with the application. It is highlighted again that the Inspector in their decision on the previous appeal did not

object to the impacts of the proposals on the external appearance of the building, concluding in para 24 of their decision that *'the external appearance of the building would be acceptable'*.

Regardless of the above, revisions have been made from the appeal submission with a reduction in the extent of render and greater use of brick. The use of render is limited to the second-floor front gable end, with the remaining building being brick. This is considered to represent an improvement on the existing building, which is rendered at first-floor level. As a consequence, the proposal is more in keeping with the surrounding buildings.

Refuse and Cycle Provision

As per the original consent, bin stores were noted as being to the front of the property. We have been advised by our Client that discussions took place with the previous planning officer regards to the suitability of this location for refuse, being located to the front of the proposed building. Further to discussions, an agreement was made to use the store next to the current building which was agreed. The bins for the existing development have therefore been stored on an existing bin store in Admirals Court.

Notwithstanding the above, the position of a new bin store and cycle store has been shown on the proposed plans which provide storage. However, should the Council require further information, a condition can be imposed requiring further details and construction of these stores before the occupation of the proposed new flats.

Suggested Demolition

There is no intention from the client to demolish the existing building; just adapt and extend.

Specialist Consultation Responses

No Objections have been raised in any of the Consultee comments, including Thames Water, the Environment Agency or Ecology.

Please contact me on the details at the top of this letter should you require any further clarification

Yours Sincerely

WJ Docherty

William Docherty