



**SHOPFRONT AND ELEVATION ALTERATIONS,
RE-ARRANGEMENT OF CLASS E FLOORSPACE
AT GROUND FLOOR, CONVERSION OF
EXISTING DWELLING INTO 3 FLATS, AND
INTRODUCTION OF A NEW DWELLING AT
REAR**

**AT 36A & 38B CHURCH STREET, CAVERSHAM.
RG4 8AU**

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF RAINSFORD LTD

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Appendix 1 - Waste Management Team Liaison

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement is submitted in support of a planning application for the proposed redevelopment and extension of existing buildings at 36A & 38B Church Street, Caversham.
- 1.2 The proposed scheme incorporates the following elements;
- Revised elevational treatments including shopfront alterations
 - Revised provision of Class E floorspace at ground floor level
 - Conversion of an existing 6 bed apartment across the first and second floors, into 3 flats (2 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed)
 - Demolition of existing ground floor wing at the rear and replacement with a 3-bed dwelling
 - Formalised parking and bins arrangement at the rear of the plot
- 1.3 The application follows a formal pre-application submission to the Council for the enhancement of the ground floor units, conversion of the existing large flat into 2 apartments, and the introduction of 2 town houses at the rear of the site. The current proposal for a reduced scale of development has been informed by Officer feedback obtained through the pre-application procedure.
- 1.4 In addition to this Statement and necessary Drawings, the application also includes a Heritage Statement, Noise and Air Quality Assessment.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The application site lies at the heart of Caversham. It forms part of Church Street, which is effectively the high street running through Caversham, offering retail, community, food and drink and leisure facilities for the local area. In addition to being within the immediate proximity of Caversham facilities and services, the site is also directly connected with Reading and all that the regional centre has to offer. Reading town centre lies approximately 1km to the south of the site and is easily accessible via foot, cycle and public transport, with regular bus connections from Church Street to central Reading. It is a very sustainable location.
- 2.2 Much of Church Street consists of post war development, albeit the application site itself and some of the adjacent buildings to the north of Church Street were built prior to this. The accompanying Heritage Statement provides a detailed breakdown of buildings in the vicinity and their historical relevance, and considers that the main building on the application site was likely constructed in the mid 19th century.
- 2.3 The site does not lie within a Conservation Area and as explained within the Heritage Statement has limited significance as an individual building, with many of the original architectural details now lost. It is however acknowledged that the building has some significance as part of a historic / pre-war street scene, and there a number of listed buildings located in the vicinity, hence the submission of the Heritage Statement as part of the current application.
- 2.4 The River Thames, and associated public open space on its northern bank, lies approximately 250m to the south of the application site, easily accessible by foot from it.
- 2.5 The building on site is two-storey in height, with accommodation within the roof and a basement. The ground floor is divided into two units, used most recently as a café and take away outlet with associated shop fronts accordingly on Church Street. Residential accommodation is provided in the first and second floor, making up one large 6 bed maisonette. A ground floor rear wing extension runs along the western boundary of the plot and accommodates a kitchen used in connection with the take-away outlet. A parking area which informally

accommodates 4 cars is present at the northern most part of the plot, accessed via a single lane off Church Street.

- 2.6 The single lane which runs to the side of the application site allows pedestrian access between Church Street and the Chester Street Car Park, which lies directly to the north of the application site and typically has parking spaces available for use. The Applicants have a right of way over the side lane to their land at the rear.
- 2.7 The Caversham Working Mens Club lies directly to the west of the single lane access, and a Hair Salon adjoins the site to the east. Much of the local area has been subject to conversion, renovations and/or redevelopments in recent times which is not surprising given the desirable, sustainable location.
- 2.8 A number of photos below help to illustrate the appearance of the application site and surroundings;



Photo 1: Application site frontage, facing NW

Client: Rainsford Ltd
Site: 36-38 Church St, Caversham



Photo 2: Application site frontage, facing NE



Photo 3: Weste elevation of application site, facing east



Photo 4: Side lane adjacent to western boudary, facing north



Photo 5: Side Lane and rear of application site, facing south



Photo 6: Rear of application site, taken from the Car Park, facing south



Photo 7: Rear of No.40 Church Street (no parking and 3 sq m of amenity for recent resi conversion)

3. Planning History

- 3.1 A number of planning applications have been considered at the nearby site of 40 Church Street, to the east of the application site (photo 7 above). Of most relevance is Application 181091, which granted consent for a number of extensions and conversion of part of the building to form 3 x 2 bed flats, in October 2020 (albeit the accompanying plans indicated 4 flats were approved). The approved scheme included one area of external amenity space, which totalled 3 m2 and served one of the 2 bed flats. No parking spaces were provided for either the residential or commercial elements of the scheme.
- 3.2 The Working Mens Club, directly to the west of the application site, has also been subject to a number of applications, enabling various extensions to be undertaken to it over the years.
- 3.3 In 2007 an appeal was allowed at 36B Church Street, which lies directly to the rear of the Working Mens Club. This approved a two-storey scheme of 4 x 1 bed flats and 4 x studio flats which have subsequently been erected and are visible from the Chester Street Car Park.
- 3.4 As is apparent from views from within the Chester Street Car Park, many extensions of varying designs and appearance have been added to the rear of the properties on Church Street and the adjacent Prospect Street, as would be expected given the central, sustainable location.
- 3.5 Planning applications at the application site itself have primarily related to adverts/signage associated with the commercial premises. There have been no previous proposals to redevelop the site, which is one of the reasons why the Applicants chose to make a Pre-Application submission ahead of the current application.
- 3.6 The Pre-Application submission (Ref 211963) related to proposals for the enhancement of the shopfront premises, conversion of the existing dwelling into two apartments and the erection of two town houses at the rear.

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- 3.7 The conversion included dormer windows being introduced to the front roof slope of the existing property and the ridge being raised to provide greater usable space for the new dwellings. The Council's Conservation Officer was opposed to the introduction of a large box dormer facing Church Street, and also requested that the existing ridge be retained. The proposed scheme has been revised in response to such comments and now excludes any dormer windows in the Church Street roof slope and retains the existing ridge as is.
- 3.8 The Conservation Officer also expressed concern that the rear development was too large in mass and too high. Once again, plans have been revised in response to such concerns with the current application now only proposing one dwelling at the rear of the site with a resulting reduction in mass and height from the pre-application proposal.
- 3.9 Officers concluded that the pre-application scheme was an over development of the site and the Applicants have notably reduced the built floorspace proposed in order to address this. Officers also suggested that the outlook/amenity for a number of the proposed dwellings in the pre-application submission would be unsatisfactory. The arrangement and relationship between dwellings has been notably amended to address this as part of the current application.
- 3.10 Further pre-application feedback included the request for Heritage, Noise and Air Quality Assessments, all of which have now been instructed, undertaken and accompany the application. With regards Transport feedback, the response advised that the Council would not support the intensification of the access to the side, given its use for pedestrians. The application does not propose the intensification of the access.
- 3.11 Comment was made in the pre-application feedback about the bin arrangements and following this detailed liaison has taken place with the Council's Waste Management Team to ensure the submitted scheme adheres with their requirements. The associated email trail is included at Appendix 1.
- 3.12 The next section of this Statement will describe the various elements of the proposal in more detail and for the above reasons they have been strongly informed by the feedback received from the Council at pre-application stage.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 The proposed scheme consists of a number of different elements as explained below.
- 4.2 The intended works to the shopfronts and other detailed works to the front of the building are intended to enhance the appearance of the building in the street scene. When viewed from the road, the right-hand shop front is in good condition, with appropriate scale and type of signage, so is not proposed for alteration. The left shop front (currently Stir Fry Caversham) is not as attractive. The upper signage is disproportionate, being much deeper than other signs nearby. As a result, alterations are proposed to replicate the features and dimensions of the righthand shop front. It is also intended to extend the shop front to the west elevation of the building, as it turns the corner into the side alley. This will replace a featureless side elevation, used purely for adverts, which is currently evident when approaching the site from the west, thereby adding interest and activity to this part of the high street.
- 4.3 At first floor level the existing illuminous shop sign and satellite dish will be removed, and the existing downpipe will be re-aligned so it does not disrupt the appearance of the front elevation. Further improvements are proposed through the introduction of sash windows to the first floor, replacing a variety of less appropriate window types currently in place.
- 4.4 Internally, the existing building currently incorporates a 6-bed maisonette at first and second floor level. This is proposed to be converted into 3 flats (2 x 1 bed and 1 x 2 bed). The upper floor will be served by heritage roof lights in the front roof slope, and 3 dormer windows plus a roof light in the rear roof slope. A courtyard area to the rear of the existing building allows for outdoor amenity space for residents.
- 4.5 The existing ground floor rear wing will be removed, and a new boundary wall erected along much of the western plot boundary adjacent to the side alley. A gate will provide pedestrian access from the side alley to the courtyard and flats, plus the Class E floorspace within the ground floor of the main building and proposed rear extension to it.

- 4.6 The courtyard will also provide access to the new 3 bed dwelling proposed at the rear of the main building. This is primarily a single storey structure with rooms within the roof allowing for two floors of accommodation. The pitched roof building enables outlooks to be retained from the first-floor rear of the main building. Private amenity space is provided to 3 sides of the new dwelling, with the main outdoor amenity area to the north of the dwelling, which itself screens any overlooking from those viewing from the rear of the main building.
- 4.7 At the northern most part of the site an existing unmarked parking area will be replaced with three allocated parking spaces, with electric charging points, and a bin store to serve the residential properties and commercial uses at the site. Access will be maintained through the parking area to a compound beyond and provision is made for Air Source Heat Pumps to serve the buildings.
- 4.8 Overall, the proposal has been designed to make efficient use of this very sustainable site and offer good quality residential and commercial accommodation for future users, whilst also enhancing the overall appearance of the site. The proposed scheme has been reduced in scale and altered in layout and detail in response to pre-application feedback from the Council.

5. Assessment against Development Plan Policy and material considerations

- 5.1 The application needs to be assessed against relevant development plan policy and determined in accordance with such policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the Development Plan is made up of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019). Material Considerations include the Council's Supplementary Planning Documents entitled, 'Revised Parking Standards and Design', 'Design Guide to Shopfronts', 'Affordable Housing' and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

- 5.2 Policy CC1 of the Local Plan sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, including reference to the Council working proactively with applicants to find solutions which mean proposals can be approved wherever possible.
- 5.3 The introduction of dwellings and enhancement of commercial space that the current application proposes, in this very sustainable location, in a manner that has responded to concerns raised at pre-application stage, is considered to receive full support from Policy CC1.
- 5.4 Policy CC2 relates to sustainable design and construction, encouraging proposals to use resources appropriately through design. The proposal will achieve such aims through adherence with conditions applied to any consent that require higher water efficiency standards and a 19% improvement over building regulations energy requirements. The scheme incorporates Air Source Heat Pumps and Electric Vehicle charging points, which will further help achieve the intentions of Policy CC2.
- 5.5 Policy CC3 of the Local Plan relates to adapting to climate change. The proposed scheme in this instance is based upon improvements to an existing building that will ensure it is more energy efficient and incorporates shade within the external amenity areas as the policy encourages.
- 5.6 Policy CC5 relates to waste minimisation and storage. The applicant has been involved in detailed discussion with the Council's waste management department, to inform the most appropriate layout. At present the site does not benefit from

any formal bin storage provision despite serving active residential and commercial premises. The proposed bin storage area at the rear of the site will improve upon the current situation, enabling the necessary bins to be stored in an attractive and effective manner that adheres with the waste collector's requirements. More details of the relevant liaison are included at Appendix 1.

- 5.7 Policy CC6 relates to accessibility and intensity of development, advising that any new development must be at a scale, density and intensity appropriate to the level of accessibility. This statement has already commented upon the Application site's very sustainable location, including swift and direct public transport connections with Reading town centre. It therefore warrants a high scale and density of development based purely upon its location, and in reality the density of the proposed scheme has been limited by the requirement to respond to the local character and scale of development that is already present, rather than any concerns regarding accessibility.
- 5.8 Policy CC7 relates to design, encouraging proposals to maintain and enhance the character and appearance of their local environment. There are two elements of the proposed scheme that warrant more detailed assessment against the design objectives in CC7 (set out in sub-headings below), these being the amendments to the front elevation, including the shop front, and the new dwelling to the rear.

Character – a place with its own identity and sense of place.

- 5.9 The proposed works to the shopfront and front elevation enhancements are fully intended to reflect the local high street character and enhance the appearance of the street scene as a result. The improvements to the left-hand shop front when viewed from the street will enhance the shop unit when viewed individually but will also sit more comfortably alongside the adjacent unit and enhance the wider shopping frontage as a whole. This is further enhanced by the proposal for the shop front to turn the corner into the alley, adding a greater vibrancy to the high street when approaching from the west.
- 5.10 The Shopfront details adhere with the 'Design Guide for Shopfronts' adopted by the Council in January 2022. This includes a list of general principles at Chapter 4, including respecting the character of the building and wider area, using signage that enhances the street scene and presenting an active frontage to the

street at all times. The proposed scheme, through enhancements to the left-hand shopfront, will adhere with all such principles. The design also follows the more detailed guidance set out on Frontages, Stallrisers, Fascias and Accessibility set out in Section 4 of the SPD.

- 5.11 In response to the pre-application feedback from the Council, no dormer windows are proposed within the front roof slope. Heritage roof lights are proposed to serve some of the second-floor rooms. As is apparent from visiting the site and viewing the photos within this and the Heritage Statement, public views of the front roof slope of the building from Church Street are not achievable as a result of the design of the existing building and available viewpoints. It follows that the introduction of roof lights within the front roof slope will not detract from the character or appearance of the building and area, because they will not be seen from public views in Church Street.
- 5.12 The proposed works to the front of 46A and 48B Church Street incorporate the attractive established elements and remove those which detract from the building and wider street scene. The proposals will represent a notable improvement in the appearance of this part of Church Street and are supported by Policy CC7 accordingly.
- 5.13 Turning to the introduction of the new dwelling at the rear, the pre-application proposal for two town houses at the rear of the site was resisted by Officers due to concern about over development of the site. A conscious effort has been made to reduce the scale of development as a result, with only one 3-bed dwelling now proposed.
- 5.14 The north and west elevational drawings incorporating the boundary treatments provide the best indication of how the new dwelling at the rear will be viewed. Having said this, the notable set back of the proposed building from the western boundary will mean that in reality, much of the new building will not be apparent above the boundary wall, to pedestrians passing by on the side lane. As a result, it will definitely not appear as a dominant feature, with only glimpses of the building being apparent when viewed from outside of the site on the side lane.
- 5.15 When viewed from the public Car Park to the north, the sunken ground floor level and resulting single storey appearance of the extension will mean that the

addition is not overly apparent, and simply adds to the variety of rear extensions evident in views from the car park. It will be built to about the same height as the single storey wing which currently extends the full depth of the plot and will be demolished as part of the proposal. The height of the building will remain lower than approved rear extension works at 38c and 40 to the east. As a result, the established main two storey building on site will retain its prominence in views from the side and rear, with the new dwelling being a subordinate addition.

- 5.16 It is recognised that there is a variety of window size and roof types within the new building to the rear, but this is reflective of the variety of such features already on display within both the existing building and surrounding rear elevations when viewed from the car park. This variety enables an efficient use of the site, without the resulting structure becoming overly dominant, as Officers were concerned about in the Pre-App response.
- 5.17 When viewing the property from the rear, the proposed dormer windows in the main roof slope will be visible. The dormers have been reduced in scale from the previous pre-app submission and are set down notably from the ridge line and up from the eaves, as design guidance encourages. Given that there is no uniformity or regular spacing between the existing first floor rear windows, there is not considered to be an architectural need to have uniform spacing between the proposed dormers. They will appear as proportionate within the main roof and add to the variety of the rear elevation which is already evident.

Continuity & Enclosure

- 5.18 One of the fundamental reasons behind the proposed shopfront amendments are to enable greater continuity to the appearance of Church Street, as opposed to the unbalanced and inconsistent adjacent shopfronts at present.
- 5.19 With regards the need for enclosure, the gated entrance off the side lane will be sufficient to ensure there is a clear divide between the public and private realm.

Quality of the public realm and provision of green infrastructure and landscaping

- 5.20 The enhancements to the front elevation and shopfronts will ensure that the quality of the public realm, most notably Church Street, will improve as a result of the proposed scheme.
- 5.21 With regards green infrastructure and planting, the site is a brownfield high street site which currently consists of no planting. The opportunity will be taken to introduce appropriate planting within and on the boundaries of the site as part of the development, to the benefit of future residents, those passing the site, and the wider environment/ecology of the area.

Ease of movement and permeability

- 5.22 The small scale of development proposed will not detract from the current opportunities for movement within the area. The Council's pre-application response advised that an intensification of vehicles using the side lane would be resisted due to the potential impact upon pedestrians. As a result, the proposed parking area at the rear of the site will simply be formalised in terms of who can park at the site and will not generate any greater activity than has occurred historically.

Legibility – clear image and easy to understand / Adaptability

- 5.23 Works to the front of the site, including the shopfront turning the corner, will result in a very clear arrangement of buildings on site. It will be very apparent that the retail units are accessed by the public from Church Street, whilst the private dwellings are accessed off the side lane.
- 5.24 The provision of two separate accesses for the various units on site does assist with any need or demand to adapt the operation of the site in future years. The comparatively new Class E use class allows a greater number of uses and users than traditionally would have been permitted under an A1 retail consent. The proposed layout and associated access points allows some flexibility with regards how the units could be operated in the future in response to market demand

Diversity – meets a wide range of needs

- 5.25 The proposed scheme will be offering enhanced commercial units which will be attractive/desirable to a greater number of operators than the current premises. It will help ensure that the premises remain occupied at a time when many high streets are under pressure for a variety of reasons, with vacant units a common occurrence in many locations.
- 5.26 The residential units will provide a variety of size and type of dwellings in a sustainable location.
- 5.27 Policy CC7 encourages high quality design and following the amendments made in response to the pre-app feedback, the proposed scheme is considered to deliver this, giving appropriate consideration to the established host building and the wider street scene.
- 5.28 Policy CC8 relates to amenity levels, requiring that existing and proposed properties will receive acceptable levels of residential amenity. This was an aspect that pre-application feedback from the Council raised concern with. Amendments made, and the reduced density of development within the site have enabled buildings and outlooks to be arranged differently, thereby offering appropriate amenity levels.
- 5.29 The flats within the existing main building benefit from notable existing windows to the front, rear and side of the building, ensuring all habitable rooms will receive reasonable outlook and natural light.
- 5.30 The building to the rear has been re-designed to ensure there is no overlooking between the flats in the main building and the rear dwelling. There are no windows within the rear dwelling that face towards the flats, and outlooks are instead provided to the north and west, onto private space associated with the dwelling. The replaced boundary wall along the western boundary will ensure that privacy is maintained from passers-by on the side lane.
- 5.31 Policy EN1 relates to the protection of the Historic Environment. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area and the building is not listed or locally listed. There are however some listed buildings in the vicinity and as a result the Council

have requested that a Heritage Statement accompanies the application. Such a Statement has therefore been instructed and prepared and is submitted as part of the current application. The Heritage Statement explains that the proposed works will not have a detrimental impact upon any of the listed buildings in the vicinity and will enhance the appearance of this part of Church Street. It is therefore strongly considered that the proposed scheme obtains the support of Policy EN1 and also accords with the requirements of Policy EN6 relating to new development in a historic context.

- 5.32 Policy EN12 relates to Biodiversity. This is a brownfield site in an urban location. However, the opportunity will be taken to introduce planting to the site, where none currently exists. As a result, a net gain in biodiversity levels will be achieved with the proposed development, as encouraged by Policy EN12.
- 5.33 Policy EN14 encourages tree retention and provision. In this instance there are no trees currently on site, but the proposed layout incorporates a tree within the courtyard area. Care will need to be taken to ensure the type of tree is appropriate for the space and urban environment and this can be ensured by way of a landscape condition applied to any consent.
- 5.34 Policy EN15 relates to Air Quality. At pre-application stage the Council advised that an Air Quality Assessment would need to accompany an application, hence one was instructed and has been submitted. This demonstrates that the proposed scheme will provide residential accommodation with an appropriate level of air quality for future residents, and that the proposed scheme will not detract from air quality levels in the wider area.
- 5.35 Policy EN16 relates to Pollution. At pre-application stage the Council advised that a Noise Assessment would need to accompany an application, hence one was instructed and has been submitted. This concludes that there should be no objection to granting planning consent for the proposed development on noise grounds due to the appropriate levels of internal and external noise that will be experienced on site.
- 5.36 Policy H1 relates to the provision of housing, setting out a minimum number of homes (15,847) to be achieved during the Local Plan period. The current

proposed scheme will contribute to such provision by providing a net increase of 3 dwellings at the site.

- 5.37 Policy H2 relates to the density and mix of housing, advising that this will be informed by a number of elements including the character of the area, the accessibility of the site, need to make efficient use of land and provide a high quality of development. An indicative density range of 60-120 dwellings per hectare is provided for urban areas.
- 5.38 In this instance the resulting density (4 dwellings in 0.04 ha) equates to 100 dph, so comfortably within the range identified in the policy.
- 5.39 The proposed density will be entirely consistent with the character of the area, which includes residential properties above ground floor retail units, plus in-depth residential development as illustrated at 40 Church Street. The proposal will enable the efficient use of the site and will represent a high quality of design as explained previously.
- 5.40 With regards the size of dwellings proposed on site, a mix of dwelling size and type is proposed across the scheme, which given its limited scale is considered entirely appropriate.
- 5.41 Policy H3 relates to affordable housing, identifying 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. The applicant is willing to enter into a s106 agreement to arrange for such a financial contribution to be made. It is however noted that the conversion of an existing dwelling to self-contained flats is exempt from such a contribution, so the financial contribution should only be required in connection with the one new build property.
- 5.42 Policy H5 sets out a number of standards for new dwellings to adhere to. This includes new build housing adhering with the national space standards and achieving water efficiency standards and a 19% improvement in emission rates over the target as defined in the 2013 Building Regs. The new build element of the scheme (dwelling at the rear) will achieve such requirements.

- 5.43 Policy H8 relates to residential conversions to self-contained flats, which is partially relevant given the proposed works to the main building. This includes reference to no inappropriate stacking of units. The scheme has been carefully laid out to ensure that bedrooms are above/below each other to minimise potential disturbance between properties.
- 5.44 Policy H10 relates to private and communal outdoor space. It comments that houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space. The policy comments that the design of such spaces will respect the size and character of others in the vicinity. In this respect it is relevant to note that the new flats approved at 40 Church Street in 2020 only provided one of them with a small area of amenity space.
- 5.45 The proposed scheme provides the new dwelling at the rear with a number of linked outdoor amenity areas to the north and west of the dwelling which will benefit from sun and shade and are screened from any overlooking from the main building by the new dwelling itself.
- 5.46 The new flats within the main building are served by a private communal courtyard offering seating and planting across an area of approximately 20 sq m. If residents require greater amenity space for exercise, leisure or relaxation then public open space is available adjoining the River Thames, approximately 250m to the south, so a short walk or cycle. This is presumably why most of the flats recently approved at 40 Church Street were not required to provide any outdoor amenity space.
- 5.47 Policy OU5 relates to shopfronts, setting out a number of criteria to be fulfilled. As explained earlier in the Statement, the proposed alterations to one of the shopfronts in this instance are considerate of the traditional context, will reverse inappropriate alterations previously made and will enhance the appearance of the premises, and the area of active frontage. As a result, the proposed scheme will fulfil the criteria set out in Policy OU5.
- 5.48 Policy RL1 relates to the hierarchy of centres within the Borough. It identifies Caversham as a District Centre, the second tier of centre behind Reading. The policy confirms that the residential use of upper floors will be supported in such centres along with environmental enhancements. It also comments that the

vitality and viability of such centres should be maintained and enhanced. The policy therefore positively supports the proposed scheme, which will achieve all such intentions.

- 5.49 Policy TR5 refers to car and cycle parking, advising that such provision should be made that is appropriate to the accessibility of the location to public transport.
- 5.50 In this instance the combined commercial and residential premises at present on site make informal use of a parking area at the rear of the site. As part of the application process it is necessary to formalise such parking provision and identify allocated spaces as requested in the Council's Pre-App response. It is considered feasible to introduce three marked car spaces to the rear of the site that can be accessed independently. One of these will be allocated for the new build 2 bed dwelling, whilst one each will serve the ground floor commercial premises.
- 5.51 Such an arrangement will mean that the flats will not have allocated parking, but that is the current position with the existing dwelling, and new flats were recently approved at 40 Church Street without any parking provision.
- 5.52 In addition to the excellent public transport connections accessible from Church Street, the site also benefits from being adjacent to a public car park, which typically has parking spaces available. As a result, given the site-specific situation, the car parking provision proposed is considered reasonable, will not generate more vehicular activity than has traditionally taken place at the site, and will not generate a demand for parking that cannot be accommodated nearby.
- 5.53 Cycle parking is proposed for the converted flats and new dwelling. Internal cycle storage is proposed for the 3 flats at ground floor level, while the new dwelling at the rear will benefit from secure cycle parking within their amenity area, which can be covered if considered necessary.
- 5.54 Policy TR5 also requires the provision of an electric vehicle charging point for all new houses. Given that one parking space is proposed for the new house, at least one electric charging point will be introduced as part of the scheme.
- 5.55 For the above reasons the proposed development is considered to be in adherence with all relevant development plan policies. Unless material

considerations indicate otherwise, the application should therefore be approved. With regards the material considerations, the Shopfront Design Guide has already been referred to and shown to support the proposed scheme. The other SPDs referred to at 5.1 are not considered to add anything of note to the issues already covered above, especially given that the Local Plan is more up to date than them.

- 5.56 With regards the NPPF this highlights the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and for reasons explained above the current proposal will achieve precisely this with Social, Environmental and Economic benefit being achieved by the proposed scheme. The additional dwellings will provide for the social need for new housing across the Borough. The enhanced appearance to the buildings will provide an improvement to the built environment, whilst some planting will be introduced to enable a biodiversity net gain. And the proposed enhanced commercial units will bring economic benefit and enhanced vitality to the District Centre, alongside the additional spend and activity generated in the local area by the new residents.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This Statement has explained how the Applicant has given careful consideration to the Council's pre-application feedback and now puts forward a development that is reduced in scale and impact, but still achieves the efficient use of this very sustainable site.
- 6.2 The proposed development will offer enhanced commercial units, both in terms of how they appear in the street scene and how they operate. Good quality residential accommodation will be provided across a variety of types and size of dwellings, albeit the District Centre location of the site has resulted in a focus towards smaller units which is considered appropriate in this instance.
- 6.3 This Statement has explained that the proposed development is considerate of its location and context, will not harm any nearby heritage assets and will represent an improvement in the current appearance of the site. It has been shown to be supported by relevant development plan policy and all material considerations, in the form of the NPPF and SPDs, further support the scheme.
- 6.4 It is therefore considered that planning permission should be granted for the proposed development. If Officers do have any concerns or queries with regards the proposed scheme, the Applicant would request that such matters can be discussed before the application is determined.