

Section 55 Town and Country Planning Act

Design and Access Statement

Rebuilding of present roof to create 1No flat.

63 London Street, Reading RG1 4PS

14 St Georges Business Centre - St Georges Square - Portsmouth - PO1 3EZ

023 9252 3352 - help@tpexpert.org - www.tpexpert.org

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Site Information

Consultant	Keith Oliver
Client	Mr Ganga Bhusal
Site Address	63 London Street, Reading RG1 4PS
LA	Reading Borough Council
Description of Development	Rebuilding of present roof to create 1No flat (Class AB)
Pathway (PD/Application/Appeal)	Application

Constraints Review

Flood Risk Zone	Flood Zone 1
Contaminated Land	No
Tree Preservation Order	No
Heritage Assets	Conservation Area
Noise Abatement Areas	No
Explosive Hazard Areas	No
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	No
Special Protection Area	No
Site of Special Scientific Interest	No
RAMSAR Convention Site	No
Site of Importance to Nature Conservation	No
Article 4(2) Directions	No

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Local Policy Requirements

Local Plan/Core Strategy

Reading Borough Local Plan - 2019

Effective Policies in Development Control

CC1 - Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
CC2 - Sustainable Design and Construction
CC6 - Accessibility and the Investment of Development
CC7 - Design and the Public Realm
EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
EN3 - Enhancement of Conservation Areas
EN6 - New Development in a Historic Context
H1 - Provision of Housing
H2 - Density and Mix
H5 - Standards for new Housing

SPG/SPD's

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD 2011

Planning History

Relevant History

090259 - Change of use from B1 (offices) to D1 (education).
Withdrawn 2009

Report Date

18 October 2021

1. Introduction

- 1.1. 63 London Street is a 3-storey, modern brick office building on the corner of London Street and South Street. The roof space is currently used for storage.
- 1.2. Planning permission is sought to rebuild the present roof to create 1 No flat.
- 1.3. Town Planning Experts act as agent for this application.



Site Location

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Site Photograph

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2. Site Context

- 2.1. 63 London Street is a modern, 3-storey, office building on the corner of London Street and South Street.
- 2.2. The main entrance is on London Street. The property has use of a shared car park to the rear accessed from South Street.
- 2.3. London Street consists of a mix of old and new properties with a mix of commercial and residential uses reflecting its edge of centre location. Buildings are generally three storeys in height.
- 2.4. South Street is more residential in character with two and three storey properties.
- 2.5. The property lies to the south of Reading town centre, within easy walking distance of shops and services. There are regular bus services along London Street.

3. Local Development Framework

National Planning Policy Framework

3.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the primary national planning policy guidance and was most recently updated in July 2021

Sustainable Development

3.2. Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the NPPF sets out the Government's overriding objectives of securing sustainable development. Para 8 of the NPPF identifies the roles of the planning system in achieving sustainable development:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

- 3.3. Paragraphs 10 and 11 go on to provide further emphasis on the focus towards sustainable development stating:

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development

11. Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*

- 3.4. With regard to housing Paragraph 60 states:

To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

- 3.5. Paragraph 62 advises that the local planning authority must assess the housing need of an area, and that

Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies.

- 3.6. The Government wishes to see effective use of land and in paragraph 120 (e) advises that planning policies and decisions should:

support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards), and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.

- 3.7. The Framework seeks to conserve and enhance the country's historic heritage. It advises in Paragraph 199:

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Local Policy

- 3.8. The Reading Borough Local Plan adopted in 2019 is the principal document in the Local Development Framework. It sets out the planning policies for development in Reading up to 2036, and is the main consideration in deciding planning applications.
- 3.9. The Local Plan seeks to promote a presumption in favour of sustainable development and guide new development to the main centres of population.
- 3.10. Policy CC2 and the subsequent policies require development to be designed and constructed having regard to Climate Change. Policy CC2 states:

Proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock, will be acceptable where the design of buildings and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of the effects of climate change.

- 3.11. Policy CC6 indicates that the scale and density of development will be related to its level of accessibility.
- 3.12. Policy CC7 indicates that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.
- 3.13. Policy EN1 indicates that areas of historic importance will be protected and where possible enhanced.
- 3.14. Policy EN3 advises that the special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 3.15. Policy EN6 with regard to new development in an historic context indicates that in areas characterised by heritage assets, the historic environment will inform and shape new development. New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development.
- 3.16. Reading seeks to make provision for an additional 15,847 homes between 2013 and 2036 (Policy H1).
- 3.17. The density and mix of accommodation will be informed by the character and accessibility of the area in which it is located. (Policy H2).
- 3.18. Policy H5 sets out the standards required for new housing.
- 3.19. The property lies within the London Street/Market Place Conservation Area.

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4. Principle of Development

- 4.1. 63 London Street is a modern 3-storey office building on the corner of London Street and South Street within the built-up area of Reading.
- 4.2. The proposal seeks to replace the existing roof with a mansard roof to accommodate a 1-bed flat. The finished height would be the same as at present.
- 4.3. Access to the flat would be via the staircase from London Street
- 4.4. The accommodation consists of a lounge/kitchen, together with a bedroom and bathroom. The floor area is 55 sq m.
- 4.5. Externally the roof will be finished in slate as per the existing roof. New windows will be added to the front and rear elevations.
- 4.6. Three windows would serve the lounge/kitchen, and two would serve the bedroom. A further window serves the bathroom.
- 4.7. London Street is a typical edge of centre street with a mix of commercial and residential properties. South Street is predominantly residential in character. The addition of one additional flat should have no significant impact. Indeed with recent changes to town centres, the provision of new housing should add to the vitality and viability of the area.
- 4.8. The overall height of the building will be similar to what exists so no overlooking or shadowing should arise.
- 4.9. The new windows will face London Street and overlook the car park to the rear. Being set back from the edge of the building any outlook from these will be forward or upwards only.
- 4.10. Although there are 2 windows to the side elevation of Chapel Court facing 63 London Street these are already overlooked by the first and second floor windows of 63 London Street and as indicated above the position of the bedroom windows will preclude further overlooking.

- 4.11. 63 London Street has 6 allocated parking spaces to the rear. One of these will be given over to bin storage while bicycle parking will be provided for 6 bicycles.
- 4.12. The property is considered to be in a sustainable location. It lies within easy walking distance of Reading town centre with its shops and services and there are also regular bus services along London Street.
- 4.13. Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan indicates 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.
- 4.14. The applicant confirms that he would be willing to enter into a S106 agreement in principle to secure this contribution.

5. The Design Appraisal

Scale

5.1. The overall size and height of the building will remain unchanged.

Amount

5.2. The proposal is for the provision of 1No. 1 bedroom flat.

Layout

5.3. Pedestrian access will be via the existing front entrance from London Street and utilising the existing staircase.

5.4. The accommodation consists of a lounge/kitchen, together with a bedroom and bathroom.

5.5. Vehicular access is via South Street into a shared car park.

Landscape

5.6. Boundary treatments remain unchanged.

Appearance

5.7. The overall appearance of the building will be largely unchanged. The roof will be replaced with a mansard roof but as this is set back from the edge of the building any views from street level will be minimal.

5.8. The roof will be finished in slate as at present.

6. The Access Appraisal

- 6.1. Pedestrian access will be via the existing front entrance from London Street and utilising the existing staircase.
- 6.2. Vehicular access is via South Street into a shared car park.
- 6.3. The property has 6 car parking spaces although one of these will be used for bin storage.
- 6.4. Given its location within walking distance of the town centre, and well served by public transport the property is considered to lie in a sustainable location. As such any resident would not be reliant on the private motor car.
- 6.5. Parking for six bicycles is proposed off South Street.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. 63 London Street is a modern 3-storey office building close to Reading town centre.
- 7.2. The application seeks the replacement of the present roof with a mansard roof of the same height to create a 1-bed flat.
- 7.3. The property is in a sustainable location and adding a new flat above accords with Government advice to use the airspace above buildings where possible.
- 7.4. Being set in from the edge of the building the new roof should be largely unseen from street level and there will be no overlooking from the new windows.
- 7.5. In the opinion of the applicant the proposal accords with National and Local policies and guidelines and as such respectfully requests that planning permission be granted.