

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**Convert garage to 1no.bed flat. Replace
flat roof with pitched roof.**

60 Beecham Road, Reading RG30 2RD

On Behalf of: Mr R Galot

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This statement is produced to support a planning application for the conversion of garage to a 1 bed flat.
- 1.2. This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3. In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following documents prepared by The Keen Partnership:
 - PL01 Location Plan
 - PL04 Proposed site plan
 - PL05 Existing plans
 - PL06 Existing elevations
 - PL07 Proposed plans
 - PL08 Proposed elevations
- 1.4. The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1. The rectangular plot accommodates a two storey terrace with detached garage to the rear garden. The terrace comprises a thru-carport allowing vehicular access to the rear yard.
- 2.2. The area is characterised by two storey terraces of a similar Victorian terrace with bay window appearance. The subject terrace is of a larger width and with a unique thru-carport feature.

3. Planning History

- 3.1. Application Ref 020590 - Conversion of dwelling house to 2 flats (Retrospective). Appeal allowed 2002.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1. The National Design Guide (2019) identifies that *"well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time"* (para 120-121).

- 4.2. Regarding the requirements of NPPG Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 14-029-20140306 in respect of Design and Access Statements, the proposal is described as follows:

Use and Amount

- 4.3. The proposed use is for a 1 bed C3 flat. The existing use is a a car garage, incidental to the use of the existing 2 flats.

Layout and Scale

- 4.4. The existing footprint is retained. The existing flat roof will be replaced with a low pitched gable roof with a ridge to less than 4metres to maintain modesty.
- 4.5. Internally, the accommodation has been laid out to utilise existing openings, with sleeping accommodation to the rear.

Landscaping

- 4.6. The existing trees have now been removed from the rear garden adjacent to the left hand flank wall as these were potentially causing damage to the structure & obscuring outside light to the proposal.. New planting can be accommodated within the curtilage and is proposed for control via condition.

4.7. *Appearance*

The existing openings of the garage will be utilised with the proposal presenting a modest and rectangular dwelling unit. The external finishes will remain and will match the existing. The proposed roof will match the existing.

4.8. *Access and Parking*

- The existing garage is an unfit size for purpose and as such on site parking is available. No parking is proposed. On-street parking is available without restriction. Please see report from Motion.
- 4.9.

Internally, disabled access and circulation requirements are designed to achieve Building Regulations Part M standards, including entrance doors to be a minimum of 800mm, electrical fittings and service controls at suitable heights for disabled persons use, and all bathrooms and WC facilities designed for disabled access.

5. Policy Assessment

National Guidance

- 5.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application. Some weight also needs to be given to the content of the Ministerial Statement, 'Planning for Growth', issued in March 2011.
- 5.2. The 'Golden Thread' running through the centre of guidance within the NPPF is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that "*Local planning authorities should approach decision on proposed development in a positive and creative way*" and "*at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible*". Paragraph 117 of the NPPF comments that planning should "*make effective use of land*" in "*meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions*".
- 5.3. Paragraph 59 confirms the Government's objective to boost the supply of housing, and paragraph 8 identifies the three objectives of sustainable development, as economic, environmental and social.
- 5.4. Paragraph 124 identifies that "*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*".
- 5.5. The National Design Guide builds on the above, and clarifies that "*well-designed neighbourhoods need to include an integrated mix of tenures and housing types that reflect local housing need and market demand. They are designed to be inclusive and to meet the changing needs of people of different ages and abilities. New development reinforces existing places by enhancing local transport, facilities and community services, and maximising their potential use*" (para 109).

Principle of Development

- 5.6. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.7. The site is located within a defined settlement where residential development is acceptable in principle subject to complying with Local Plan Policy H8.
- 5.8. Local Policy H8 sets out the requirements for residential conversions which are assessed on impact on the amenity and character of the area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, privacy, amenity space, parking and bins. Consideration is also given the Residential Conversions SPD (2013). The criteria of Policy H8 is below:
- 5.9. • *The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features;*
- The conversion maintains the existing building footprint, whilst raising the ridge to a more sustainable pitched roof. The pitch is kept low to minimise intrusion within the landscape. The existing window openings are maintained and the existing garage door will be changed to a glazed door opening. The insertion of rooflights has minimal impact on the character of the building. Therefore the existing openings are maintained to respect the physical character of the structure.
- 5.10. • *The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;*
- The building to be converted is not a single family house.

5.11. • *There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;*

5.12. - There is no adverse impacts to residents. Covered by 'Residential Amenity' section of this statement.

5.13. • *There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;*

- Not applicable.

5.14. • *Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and,*

- The existing cycle and bin storage can accommodate the increased use, and is indicated on the submitted plans.

5.15. • *The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom for residents.*

- The proposed 1 bed unit provides adequate internal floorspace and headroom.

5.16. The proposal therefore complies with Policy H8 and is acceptable in principle.

5.17. In addition, Local Policy H11 relates to development of residential gardens. Although the development is a conversion and not a new build, the proposal is assessed against the criterion below for completeness.

1. *Makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:*

- *The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area*
- *A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot*

frontages, parking areas, and existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage

- *Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries. This includes features such as the variety of trees, hardstanding/lawns and hedges, etc*
- *Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area*
- *The materials and elevational detail. These should be high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/ or complementary*
- *The arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features and their rhythm between buildings*
 - The conversion maintains the existing building footprint, whilst raising the ridge to a more sustainable pitched roof. The pitch is kept low to minimise intrusion within the landscape. The existing window openings are maintained and the existing garage door will be changed to a glazed door opening. The insertion of rooflights has minimal impact on the character of the building. Therefore the existing openings are maintained to respect the physical character of the structure. Being a conversion, there is minimal change to the existing landscaping and physical nature of the site.

2. The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking

- The existing garage is proportionate to the size of the plot. Therefore the conversion to a flat will not cramp the site, with the main 2 storey element of the site being over 20metres from the garage. The proposal is therefore of adequate size with adequate spacing.

3. The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards

- Access is not provided given the constraints of the site.

4. The proposal does not lead to tandem development

- The nature of the site and conversion nature provides a suitable form of development within its context.

5. The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas, and avoids the need for additional physical security measures

- There is no exposure of private boundaries to public areas, and no additional security measures are required.

6. The proposal does not cause a significant detrimental impact to the amenity of adjacent and nearby occupants

- There is no significant detrimental impact to the amenity of nearby occupants. See 'Residential Amenity' below.

7. The emphasis is on the provision of family-sized housing

- The size of the existing structure constrains the ability to provide family-sized housing.

8. The development provides biodiversity net gain wherever possible, and would not have an adverse impact on biodiversity in terms of the fragmentation of blocks of gardens, which as a unit or in association with adjacent green space are deemed to make an important contribution to biodiversity and contribute to the green network

- The conversion nature ensures there is minimal impact on existing garden biodiversity.

9. The proposal does not prejudice the satisfactory development of a wider area

- The proposal does not prejudice development of a wider area.

Sustainable Development

5.18. The following sustainability benefits are relevant:

- a) Social: The proposal would increase the supply of housing.
- b) Economic: The development would generate local construction jobs, provide efficient use of land, create increased in-perpetuity local council tax revenue payable to the Council and also provide a CIL contribution towards improving local infrastructure. The proposal would also create additional local spending in the area and wider District in perpetuity through accommodating new residents.
- c) Environmental: The site is in a suitable location and the proposal utilises an existing structure.

Character and Appearance of the Area

5.19. The proposed conversion of the garage is not visible from the streetscene, due to the terraced character. The raising of the ridge height and proposed pitched roof is low in height to minimise changes to the area. However, its siting and softening against nearby established trees ensures the proposed changes will not negatively impact on the character and appearance of the area. The area is not solely defined by terraced dwellings, with flats at no.70 Beecham Road and adjoining the rear of the site at 41-43 St George's Road. Therefore the proposed flat is not out of character with the area and accords with Local Plan Policy CC7.

Listed Building (setting)

5.20. To the southwest rear of the site is Grade II Listed Church of St George. The relationship between the garage and Church is negligible, with outbuildings, fencing and established trees severing direct sight lines and relationship. The proposed pitched roof is kept low to reduce physical impact. The proposed ridge height is not of a scale that threatens the setting

of the Listed Building, particularly given the existing built form on site. Therefore, it is considered the proposal results in less than substantial harm, and protects the setting of the Listed Building in accordance with Local Plan Policy EN1.

Residential Amenity

- 5.21. The proposed 1 bed flat accommodates an open living area, bathroom, storage cupboard and a small study area. The living area benefits from bi-folds, flank window and two rooflights. The bathroom and bedroom benefit from a flank window whilst the study benefits from a rooflight. Therefore the proposed flat has ample internal space and access to light. Policy H10 requires amenity space, and separate garden space is provided for the proposed flat, whilst the existing flats share the remaining garden. The locality has a variety of garden sizes, with terrace gardens, as well as smaller amenity spaces for the flats at 70 Beecham Road, and to the rear of the site at 41-43 St George's Road. Therefore the garden sizes are not out of character with the area.
- 5.22. The existing building comprises a main two storey element with a single storey rear projection that does not contain rear facing windows. The rear access faces the flank with a small decking area. Therefore the single storey element poses minimal privacy or amenity issues for the existing or proposed occupants. The main two storey buildings' rear windows exceed a distance of 20metres to the garage building.
- 5.23. The conversion will not have any negative impact to the neighbouring residential uses, nor will there be any external alterations that would threaten privacy or amenity in accordance with CC8.
- 5.24. *Trees and Landscaping*
- 5.25. The rear garden will be split to provide a dedicated amenity space for the new flat, with 1.5m close boarded fencing, railings and planting to delineate boundaries.

Transport and Parking

- 5.26. Beecham Road is a one-way road that is not classified, and does not have parking restrictions. On-street parking therefore benefits both sides of the street. The site does not currently utilise its garage and thru-carport, therefore the existing site does not have an available parking.
- 5.27. The site is within 200m of an Oxford Road bus stop, which services 9 routes east and west. These routes run very frequently with just one route 15/15a running up to 10-15minutes in peak times. In addition, the site is within walking distance (within 800m) of Reading Retail Park as well as Tesco extra. Reading West station is 1.2km away and can be accessed by the bus routes along Oxford Road.
- 5.28. The material increase of traffic and parking for a 1bed unit would be minor and would not threaten the safety of the highway network. Given the sustainable location, provision of cycle storage, as well as ample on street parking available, the proposal is considered acceptable without providing one space for the 1 bed dwelling unit in accordance with Local Plan Policy TR1 and TR3.

Cycle provision

- 5.29. Secure cycle storage is indicated on the submitted plans, and is to be shared with the existing flats.

Refuse Provision

- 5.30. Secure refuse provision is indicated on the submitted plans, and is to be shared with the existing flats.

Drainage/SUDs

- 5.31. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 where a Flood Risk Assessment is not required. There is no change to the existing drainage arrangement.

Sustainability/Energy

5.32. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF supports the transition of development to a low carbon future. The national Code for Sustainable Homes has now been abolished, however it is proposed that the development would conform to Part L of the Building Regulations which as of 2010 requires a 25% reduction in carbon emissions over the 2006 standards. This is equivalent to Code level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. By way of contributing to the reduction in carbon, the proposal would also achieve current building construction standards with added sustainability measures through;

- a) The limitation of the amount of inherent material, structure and embodied energy through the use of an existing building and employment of good building standards;
- b) Use of locally sourced, recycled materials and labour where practicable
- c) Maximizing the use of natural light through bifolds and rooflights
- d) Reduced internal water consumption of 110 litres per person per day through the incorporation of water efficient sanitary fittings, including low flow toilets and water efficient taps for wash basins.
- e) Refuse, recycling and composting facilities to be provided to work with the Council's existing waste and recycling collection service
- f) Secure cycle provision to encourage sustainable modes of transport
- g) Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable

5.33. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with sustainability objectives in this respect.

Affordable Housing

5.34. Local Policy H3 requires a 10% financial contribution (5% payment). The client is willing to enter into a legal agreement to secure such contribution, during the course of the application process.

Community Infrastructure Levy

5.35. The proposed development is CIL liable. The relevant forms have been completed and submitted with the application.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and makes an efficient use of land.
- 6.2. Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 5 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would contribute an appropriate windfall site to the Borough's housing supply/, without adverse effect on the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- 6.3. It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted. If one views the immediate surrounding area one will see that there is a similar backland development incorporating a single storey residential scheme directly behind this proposal.