

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: 3 Prospect Street, Caversham

Application No: 201857/FUL

Applicant: Mr Ngau Chan

Proposal: Single storey extension to existing cafe (amended)

Agreed Target Date: 01/10/21

Case Officer: Connie Davis

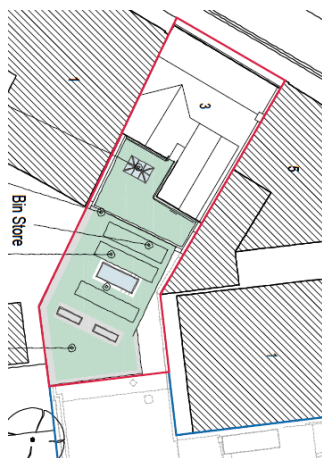
1.Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The 0.07 ha site is formed of an irregular 'L' shape with frontages to Prospect Street. The existing building fronting Prospect Street, is in use as a café/ restaurant (The Happy Diner). It is a two-storey red brick building with a single storey rear extension that covers the entirety of the rear of the plot.

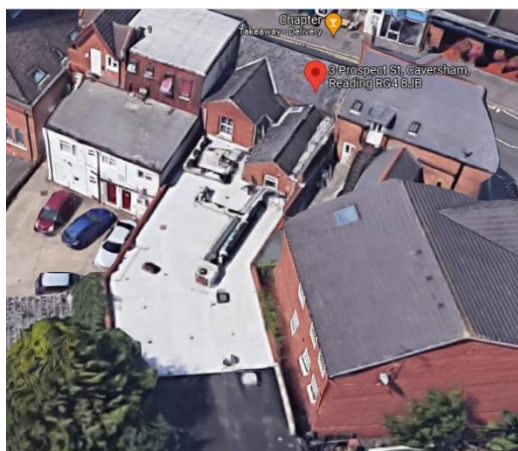
The site is located within the Caversham District Centre within Policy RL1 of the Local Plan. The site is not Listed, nor in a Conservation Area.

2. The Proposal

Planning permission is sought for a single storey rear extension to the existing cafe/ restaurant. It would extend to a depth of 20m and have a maximum height of 3m. It would have a flat roof. It would be finished in brick.



Proposed site plan



Existing site

The proposal originally included an upwards extension to create a new dwelling as well as a two storey rear extension to create a new office.

3. Consultation

Internal Consultation

Natural Environment - No objection subject to condition

Transport - No objections subject to CMS condition

Ecology - Required a further bat survey to be carried out

External Consultation

The following addresses were formally consulted via letter on 18/01/21:

1, 5 Prospect Street
1a North Street
2, 4, 6, 8, 10 South Street

5 letters of representation were received relating to the following matters:

- Concerns over parking for the occupiers of the development
- The proposal does not go far enough to meet policy requirements in terms of sustainability
- Concerns over loss of trees and the impact a loss of trees would have in reducing loss of privacy
- Overlooking onto neighbouring sites - onto windows and amenity space
- Proposed office would be higher than the current building height and would overlook neighbouring properties - inadequate separation distance retained
- Overshadowing and loss of light to neighbouring properties
- Inadequate prevention of flooding
- Noise and light pollution from the roof garden and office
- smells from waste
- Development does not respect the local context
- Properties on Prospect Street are from the Victorian era - the office would be a modern design and therefore would be out of place
- Condition restricting times at which works can be carried out to minimise noise disruption and traffic issues for the benefit of residents should be included for the benefit of residents
- The building should remain 2 storey and not be extended upwards, to maintain variety in the street scene.
- The first and second floor plans show bedrooms lit and ventilated by windows on to the busy Prospect Street which suffers from traffic noise and poor air quality
- Overdevelopment of the site, especially when considered in relation to the application submitted at 1a North Street
- Access to the proposed rear office is through the site of 201680 and the bins and other servicing for the proposed cafe restaurant would also need to go in and out through the separate rear flats site.
- Servicing for the proposed estate agent and the two upper floor flats appear to be from Prospect St only. Bin storage on the narrow pavement would be unacceptable.
- Opportunity should be taken to enhance the historic property
- The rear offices proposed are accessed through the 201680 site. There are benefits for Prospect Street in servicing more of the proposed uses for 3 Prospect Street from the rear through the 201680 site owned by the applicant. In this context the proposed ground floor rear office appears overdevelopment and the servicing arrangements to 3 Prospect St would benefit from amendment

Officer comment: The above will be discussed in the report. It should be noted that during the course of the application the scheme has been heavily modified, so it now only incorporates a new single storey rear extension. No new residential development is proposed (and therefore no upwards extension), nor is the office proposed to be two storey. Naturally, this will overcome some of the concerns above.

4. Plans and Documents Considered

The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following plans & documents:

Drawing No.:

3661/236 Rev C - Ground Floor Plan

Received 2nd September 2021

3661/232 Rev B - Rear extension elevations

3661/235 Rev C - Location and Block Plan

3661/237 Rev C - First Floor Plan

Received 24th August 2021

3661/239 Rev D - Proposed Elevations

Received 26th May 2021

Air Quality Assessment Ref: 20-7332 prepared by Syntegra Consulting dated November 2020

Noise Impact Assessment Ref: 20-7332 prepared by Syntegra Consulting dated October 2020

Preliminary Roost Assessment Report Ref: 20-7332 prepared by Syntegra Consulting dated October 2020

CIL Form

Application Form

Planning Design & Access Statement

3661/104 - Existing Floor Plans Basement and Ground Floor

3661/105 - Existing Floor Plans First Floor and Roof

3661/106 - Existing Elevations

Affordable Housing Viability Appraisal

Received 22nd December 2020

5. Relevant Planning History

None of relevance to this application.

6. Discussions with applicant/ agent

The scheme was revised over the standard of accommodation proposed to be created through the additional flat. The flat would fall short of space standards, and would have resulted in overlooking/ loss of privacy to neighbours, particularly

through the use of a roof garden. As such, the scheme was amended to remove the additional dwelling, and the extension reduced to single storey level over concern that this would represent an overdevelopment of the site.

7. Equality Act 2010:

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

8. Relevant Planning Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Plan (2019).

The ‘*National Planning Policy framework*’ (‘NPPF’) 2021 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The ‘NPPF’ states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) according to their degree of consistency with the ‘NPPF’ (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the ‘NPPF’, the greater the weight that may be given). Accordingly, the ‘NPPF’ and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

9. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework;

National Planning Policy Guidance;

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

RL1: Network and Hierarchy of Centres

EN6: New Development in a Historic Context

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

EN15: Air Quality

EN18: Flooding and Drainage

EM4: Maintaining a Variety of Premises

TR3: Traffic, Access and Highway-Related Matters

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

10. Appraisal

1) Principle of Development

2) Design and impact on the street scene

- 3) Impact on neighbouring amenity
- 4) Transport
- 5) The Natural Environment
- 6) Other matters raised in representations

1) Principle of Development

The proposal entails an extension to an existing use of the site. The rear of the site is currently developed and so the extension would not be built on undeveloped land. As such, the principle of extending a commercial use within the District centre is considered acceptable, subject to meeting other policy requirements including design and safeguarding amenity.

2) Design and impact on the street scene

The extension is of a more contemporary design than the existing Victorian main building. As part of the consultation period, it was considered that the extension would not suitably integrate with the existing building. The site is not Listed, nor in a Conservation Area and therefore heritage policies cannot be strictly applied. Given the design of the existing extension, the proposed is considered comparable, would have a higher specification and finish by way of materials used and other elements of the design, such as the green roof; bringing vegetation to a densely built up area. As such, there is not considered a strong resistance to the proposal in design terms and the extension would have limited visibility in the street scene due to being situated at the rear of the site.

Comments were also raised that the extension would be an overdevelopment of the site. However, as mentioned, the site is already developed at ground floor level. Whilst the plot to the side/ rear of the site (1a North Street) is also proposed to be developed, each application is assessed on its own merits and no application at 1a North Street has been approved at the time of writing.

As such, when assessed in relation to the existing context, on balance the design is considered acceptable and indeed a somewhat improvement to the site in line with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

3) Impact on neighbouring amenity

The extension would replace an existing extension and therefore the impact on neighbouring amenity would not be considered more substantial than the existing situation given the height of the extension will be the same, but it will reduce in depth. The extension would not be considered to result in a loss of privacy/ light to neighbouring properties due to the constraints of the site and the development not going above ground floor. Ground floor windows will not result in extended views into neighbouring buildings. Furthermore, as the site is commercial rather than residential, the extension would not be utilised at all times.

Given the proposal has substantially altered from when the consultation period was carried out, it is considered the revised plans address concern over matters raised in the representations regarding neighbouring amenity.

As such, the proposal is considered in line with Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. However, a condition will be applied preventing the roof to be used as

a roof terrace without separate planning permission being obtained from the Local Planning Authority in the interests of neighbouring amenity and retaining privacy.

4) Transport

Given the existing site does not have rear access, all cycles and bins currently travel through the main building. This will remain the same situation as a result of the new extension. Whilst not the most desirable situation, the current bin/ cycle provision will remain as existing which is considered acceptable in relation to Policy TR5 and CC5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and no conditions required regarding these matters.

However, given the site's busy and congested location, Transport officers have advised that a pre-commencement condition requiring a Construction Method Statement to be submitted is required to ensure the development would be in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety. The applicant will also be reminded via an informaitive to carry out work during sociable hours.

5) The Natural Environment

Ecology

The Ecologist confirmed that the bat survey report (Syntegra Consulting, Ref: 20-7332, October 2020) has been undertaken to an appropriate standard concludes since there are potential access points and crevice roosting opportunities within the walls and roof spaces, a further survey should be undertaken to confirm whether the building hosts a bat roost. The results of the survey would need to be provided before the application is determined

However, given the substantial revisions to the scheme (and the proposal now not involving works to the roof), it is considered the context of the scheme now materially differs. The survey concludes that *'The internal survey of the loft spaces noted potential crevice roosting opportunities and potential access points'*. Given the proposal now only comprises of a replacement single storey extension rather than works to the roof, Officers do not consider a further survey is required in this instance.

Trees

Given the site is developed, there is it is not practical to propose tree planting due to space constrains (both below and above ground). However, a hedge row is shown on the proposed plans which will be secured via condition, along with the inclusion of a green roof. As such, the proposal sees an increase of vegetation on site compared to the existing situation which is considered positive in line with Policy EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

6) Other matters raised in representations

- Concerns over parking for the occupiers of the development

The proposal no longer incorporates new residential accommodation. Transport officers did not raise concerns the extension to the café would require additional parking

- The proposal does not go far enough to meet policy requirements in terms of sustainability

The proposal involves an extension to an existing use. As such, BREEAM/ SAP requirements are not applicable

- Concerns over loss of trees and the impact a loss of trees would have in reducing loss of privacy

No trees are to be removed as part of the proposal

- Inadequate prevention of flooding

The site is located in Flood Zone 1 according to the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Map for Planning. As such, the probability of flooding on site is low and, in this instance, further information on flooding/ drainage is not required by the Local Planning Authority

- Noise and light pollution from the roof garden and office
A condition will be included not allowing the use of the roof as an amenity area. The café will be contained to ground floor and so would not be considered to result in light pollution that would be largely visible by neighbours

- Smells from waste

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure adequate waste management

- Condition restricting times at which works can be carried out to minimise noise disruption and traffic issues for the benefit of residents should be included for the benefit of residents

A Construction Method Statement will be secured via condition so the Council is aware of how construction will take place

Recommendation - GRANT Permission subject to the following conditions and informatives:

- 1) Time Limit
- 2) Approved Plans
- 3) Materials as specified
- 4) No use of the roof as a balcony/ roof terrace
- 5) Prior to first occupation/use of the extension hereby approved, a scheme of soft landscaping, including details of the green roof, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted and must include a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting and the green roof.

Planting shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the extension or in accordance with a timetable agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Any trees, plants or green roof vegetation which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interest of ensuring that the landscaping of the development enhances the visual local environment and in accordance with Policy CC7 and EN14 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

6) No development shall commence on site, including any works of demolition, until a site specific Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Statement shall provide for:

- a) Space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided;
- b) Location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- c) The erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site;
- d) Identification of any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction;
- e) Required wheel washing facilities on site;

The measures within the approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the demolition and construction period unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: These details are required due to insufficient information being contained within this submission and in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety in accordance with Policy CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

Informatives

- 1. Terms
- 2. Building Control
- 3. Complaints about construction
- 4. Encroachment
- 5. Pre-commencement conditions
- 6. Positive and Proactive