

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

SITE ADDRESS: 581 Basingstoke Road, Reading

APPLICATION NUMBER: 191909/FUL

PROPOSAL: Proposed change of use of ground floor premises from A1 (Retail) to D1 (Non-residential institution) place of worship

CASE OFFICER: Anthony Scholes

AGREED EXTENSION OF TIME TO: 31 July 2020

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The site relates to a semi-detached property on the Eastern side of Basingstoke Road within a predominantly residential area. Across Basingstoke Road (to the East) is a commercial/industrial area. The existing pair of semi-detached dwellings are both within retail use at ground floor with the existing property having most recently been in use as a florist (class A1).

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the proposed conversion of the existing ground floor florist (A1) to a D1 community use (non-residential institution) for a place of worship. The proposal would also include alterations to the ground floor façade.

Plans and documents

The applicant has submitted the following information in support of the application

Drawing No: MC/3000/01 - Existing floor plans

Drawing No: MC/3000/02 - Proposed floor plans

Drawing No: MC/3000/03 - Existing elevations

Drawing No: MC/3000/04 - Proposed elevations

Application forms

Supporting letter prepared by MC Designs

Location and block plan

As received 4 December 2019

Amended location and block plan

As received 10 February 2020

Document No: KD2804208NR - Sound Insulation Assessment,

As received 24 April 2020

Drawing No: MC/300/05 Rev B - Proposed front elevation

As received 14 September 2020

Relevant Planning History

06/00037/FUL (060526) - Change of use of 581 Basingstoke Road from florist shop to restaurant/ takeaway and new shop front to 579-581 Basingstoke Road APPROVED 28/4/2006

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Transport - No objection, subject to conditions and informatives.

EP - No objection, subject to conditions and informatives.

Notification letters regarding the application were sent to neighbouring properties. No letters have been received at the date of writing.

Equalities Act

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RELEVANT POLICIES AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Legal and Planning Policy Context

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. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

In this regard the NPPF allows full weight to be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)). The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents are also material planning considerations.

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

National

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

CC2 Sustainable design and construction

CC3 Adaptation to climate change

CC5 Waste minimisation and storage

CC7 Design and the public realm,

CC8 Safeguarding amenity

CC9 Securing infrastructure

EN16 Pollution and water resources

TR1 Achieving the transport strategy

TR3 Access, traffic and highway-related matters

TR6 Car and cycle parking and electric vehicle charging

OU1 New and existing community facilities

OU6 Shopfronts and cash machines

Supplementary Planning Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (adopted October 2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (adopted July 2019)

APPRAISAL

Principle

The proposed site is a vacant A1 shop, which is not within a local or district centre, therefore there are no specific policies restricting its change of use from a shop unit. In any case the proposed D1 is normally considered a suitable 'centre use', but as it is not a main town centre use it would not be subject to a sequential test requirement.

The relevant policy for this proposed place of worship (community facility) is Policy OU1 (New and existing community facilities). This states that: *'Proposals for new, extended or improved community facilities will be acceptable, particularly where this will involve co-location of facilities on a single site. Proposals for on-site intensification of important facilities, such as schools and healthcare uses, will be supported, subject to other policies in the plan... New community facilities should be located where there is a choice of means of travel (including walking and cycling), and in existing centres where possible'.*

The proposed site is not located within a local or district centre, nor is it co-located with other community uses. The applicant has stated that the site would be used by local residents and has provided a letter of support signed by local residents (including addresses). The signatories are all located within a short distance of the site. In addition, the proposed development is well connected to a high frequency bus route and it is in close proximity to nearby bus stops. Additionally, cycling and walking routes between the surrounding residential areas appear reasonable. The proposed site, by virtue of its size and capacity would not be suitable for more than 10-15 persons at a time and would be most likely to attract local residents. As such, the proposed development is considered to comply with policy OU1.

Sustainability

In accordance with Local Plan Policy CC2: '... all minor non-residential development or conversions to residential are required to meet the most up-to-date BREEAM 'Very Good' standard as a minimum all non-residential development or conversions to residential should incorporate water conservation measures so that predicted per capita consumption does not exceed the appropriate levels set out in the applicable BREEAM standard. Both residential and non-residential development should include recycling greywater and rainwater

harvesting where systems are energy and cost effective.’ Although relevant to the proposal, the minor nature of the development would not be considered reasonable and as such a condition for this would not meet the legislative requirements.

Design Considerations

Policy CC7 requires all development to be of a high quality and respect and enhance the character of the area in which it is located.

The proposal includes alterations to the ground floor façade to provide two entrances with glazing in lieu of the existing single entrance. The site is not located within a row of shops, or a designated centre. The loss of the shopfront and provision of a less commercial façade is representative of the proposed use and is considered acceptable subject to conditions relating to materials.

No other alterations to the main façade, boundary treatments and hardstanding to the front of the property are proposed. The external alterations to the building are limited to the demolition of part of the single storey rear extension to provide additional carparking on site.

The proposal is not considered to have any detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. Any future advertising would require separate consent.

Amenity

Policy CC8 seeks to ensure new development does not have a detrimental impact on the living environments of existing or proposed residential uses. Above the proposed ground floor use is an existing C3 flat at first floor level. The proposed hours of operation were: 0600 - 2200 Monday to Friday, 0800 to 2200 Saturdays, and 0800 to 2100 Sundays.

A use of this nature would create noise and disturbance from visitors including car doors opening and closing on arrival and departure, talking between users before, during or after worship, car engines starting, and cars idling; any artificial lighting associated with the use including lighting of parking areas or doorways, internal lighting escape; and vibration caused by visitors entering the site or moving around inside the space. Officers considered that the proposed use, which would be for 10 persons 4-5 times per day (prayer times), should have hours consistent with a retail use and further to discussion with the applicant agreed a

revision from 6am to 8am start each day, which will be secured by condition. As the proposed hours would be generally consistent with the retail use it is considered that this would be unlikely to result in any undue nuisance to the flats above and is considered acceptable.

There would be no amplified music, and a condition will be attached to ensure this.

No details of external lighting have been provided, although the applicant's statement suggests some may be required. Full details of which will be secured by condition.

Transport

The proposal includes sufficient on-site parking, bin storage, and bicycle parking, as well as maintaining the existing access arrangements. A condition is recommended to provide these facilities as proposed. In addition, a car parking management plan will be required to ensure the operator manages the car parking area appropriately.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Full Planning Permission subject to conditions and informatives