

PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

**Change of use from commercial to 2no.
1 bed flats. Retention of first floor flat.
Insertion of 2no. roof lights.**

3 New Lane Hill, Reading RG30 4JE

On Behalf of: Mr M Saood

Report Prepared By: Emily Temple, BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI Director

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support a planning application for change of use of ground floor commercial to 2 x 1 bedroom residential flats.
- 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 Chris Keen Partnership:
- PL01 Site Location plan
 - PL05 Existing plans
 - PL07 Proposed plans
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The site accommodates a 2 storey mid-terrace brick property with loft accommodation, to the west of New Lane Hill. The property is mixed use, with commercial on the ground floor and a 1 bedroom flat above.
- 2.2 Adjoining the south is a single storey commercial property, whilst to the north are two terraces of a similar appearance that are in residential use.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 No online planning history found for 3 New Lane Hill.

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 current use is 1x A1 on the ground floor, and 1x 1bed C3 residential to the second and loft floor. The proposed use is for 3 x 1 bed C3 residential flats.

Layout and Scale

- 4.4 The proposal will provide 2 x 1 bed flats to the ground floor, whilst retaining the existing flat on the second and loft floor. The ground floor flats are of a ‘mirror design’, with living space to the elevation and bathroom and bedrooms to the centre.

Landscaping

- 4.5 Existing trees and landscaping are to be retained and protected. The change of use will not have an impact on existing landscaping

Appearance

- 4.6 The change of use will enhance the appearance of the property by removing the roller shutter and activating the ground floor elevation. Two rooflights are proposed to the existing rear flat roof projection.

Access and Parking

- 4.7 The existing vehicular arrangement is maintained. Pedestrian access will utilise the existing front entrance opening to a foyer. The foyer services the front doors to the ground floor flats as well as stairs to the first floor flat.

5. Policy Assessment

National Guidance

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is relevant to the consideration of 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"*, whilst paragraph 131 states that *"In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings."*
- 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 not impacting on the Conservation Area and 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:

- *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 change of use, by nature, respects the physical character of the area as there is minimal external alteration to the building.

- *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 changed is not a single family house.

- *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;*

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

- *There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;*

- As far as is practicable, the bathrooms and kitchens are located to avoid inappropriate stacking and location.

- *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,*

- Provided. Covered in below section of this statement.

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

- Adequate internal floorspace provided. Covered in below section of this statement.

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

Loss of Shop

- 5.10 The change of use will result in the loss of one retail unit that is currently vacant, and has been vacant for two years since the passing of the sole shop owner who ran the store. It is noted the site is not within a designated Shopping area or Frontage, and that there are two large retail units opposite Bath Road. The two large retail units in such proximity means there is limited viability for the continuation of the small A1 store.

Size and mix of Dwellings

- 5.11 The proposed 2 x 1 bed flats will complement the existing 1 bed upper floor flat. The flats meet national internal space standards as required by local policy with the smallest flat 1 measuring 37.5m².

Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

- 5.12 The site is located within the Horncastle Conservation Area. The proposed conversion, by its nature, protects the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The external alterations include two new rooflights to the single storey flat roof rear projection. The proposed rooflights, being to the rear and not readily visible, would therefore not have an adverse impact on the Conservation Area, resulting in less than substantial harm. The proposal will remove the existing unsightly roller shutter from the vacant store, improving the appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposal therefore complies with Local Plan policies EN1 and EN3.

Residential Amenity – internal space

- 5.13 Flat 1 measures 37.5m², flat 2 is 39.5m³ and flat 3 (existing) is 70m². These accord with the national space standards and are therefore adequate internal amenity provision.

Residential Amenity – external space

- 5.14 External amenity space is provided for all units, and all are in excess of 20m².
- 5.15 There is public open space 50m north of the site on New Lane Hill, providing a close and easily accessible open space.
- 5.16 The change of use to residential 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.

Trees and Landscaping

- 5.17 There is no alteration to the existing landscaping scheme. The nature of the change of use ensures there will not impact be an impact on trees in the vicinity.

Transport and Parking

- 5.18 The access and parking arrangement remain as existing with a single space. 1.5 spaces are required for each flat (Zone 3) to officially accord with the Council's parking standards. There is therefore a shortfall of 3.5 spaces.
- 5.19 The site is located adjacent Bath Road which is a dedicated cycle route as well as accommodating bus routes, with a bus stop at the corner of Bath Road and New Lane Hill (being 70 metres from the site). In addition, the across Bath Road are two large supermarkets providing walkable local amenities. These factors are considered to make the site sufficiently sustainable in lieu of providing the parking standards, particularly when regarding the AQMA designation, where increasing vehicle use would be detrimental to local air quality.

Cycle provision

- 5.20 Half a cycle space per flat (2 cycles total) will be provided in a secure and covered storage building to the rear of the property. The details can be secured by condition.

Refuse Provision

- 5.21 Bin storage is proposed to the front of the site as shown on the proposed plan PL07.

Air Quality

- 5.22 The site is located within Reading AQMA, where Local Plan policy EN15 requires mitigation to be demonstrated. The proposal does not provide additional car parking, and avoids siting bedrooms to the ground floor front elevation, as supported by paragraph 4.2.80. As such, the proposal would have no worse an effect on local air quality than existing.

Drainage/SUDs

- 5.23 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

- 5.24 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 employment of good building standards to

create an excellent SAP rating;

b) Use of locally sourced, recycled materials and labour where practicable

c) Maximizing the use of natural light through large windows

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) 'A' rated electrical appliances and energy saving light fittings

h) 'A' rated double glazed windows with natural cross ventilation provision

i) Water butts fitted to the rainwater down pipes for watering the garden

j) Recycling of waste construction materials where practicable

k) Permeable driveway/parking spaces to avoid increase in surface water runoff

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

Affordable Housing

- 5.25 Policy H3 requires 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. This is to be secured via 106 legal agreement during the course of the planning application.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 5.26 The proposed development is CIL liable, but not chargeable due to the conversion of existing floorspace. 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.