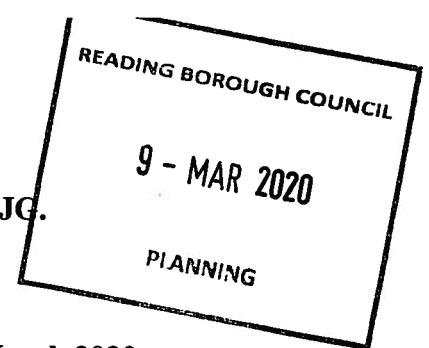


Proposed Change of Use, 12 Wokingham Road, Reading RG6 1JG.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT.

March 2020.



Background Information.

No.12 Wokingham Road was originally built as a shop with living quarters above during the first decade of the 20th century. From 1930 to 1967 the building was used as a dairy and milk depot. Following this it was used as a diesel generator manufacturer and sales office. Since then it has had low key retail uses up until the present day. It has always been in a secondary location off the Wokingham Road, and a minor contributor to the cemetery junction shopping area.

Footfall has reduced over time due to changing work and living patterns in the district. Both the retail market and the limited footfall has meant, over the last 10 years there has been very limited demand for this premises.

During the first decade of this century, it was even used as an office, acting as a reception for the upper floors, but even this activity could not be sustained for very long.

My client purchased the property in 2006.

In 2008 half the ground floor plus the upper floors were converted to three self-contained flats. These flats have never been empty since their conversion, and remain in popular demand.

The Proposal.

It is proposed to convert the ground and lower ground floors to a self-contained flat.

Its total floor area will be 55 sq. metres.

Its access will be via the existing adjoining lobby that serves the three converted flats.

The accommodation will also have rear access to the car park, bin and bike storage off Granby Gardens.

There will be no material change to the external elevation of the building.

Recent History of its Uses.

Since my client has owned the property over the last 14 years, the accommodation has been used as reception area for the first floor offices. This lasted for about two years following a 9-month gap, and was rented by a small bookshop for two years before closing down.

The shop then remained empty for three years. During this time it was marketed by Lansley commercial agents.

A tenant was eventually found who ran a fabric shop for three years before vacating the property.

Since then there has been a couple of periodic short tenancies of six months.

The shop now remains empty with little or no chance of finding a new tenant. Due to the changing market and circumstances in the area, this secondary location is no longer feasible for retail use.

Changing Uses in the Area.

Small independent shops are also being driven out by the large companies such as Tesco and the Co-op. These two companies are very active in the Cemetery Junction area. This has laid extra pressure on their survival.

Within 20 metres of the site, there is another empty shop.

The bank on the nearby corner has had a couple of uses since it closed, but is now a computer repair shop. The public house has been converted to an ice cream parlour, and immediately beside no12 is a hairdresser, mortgage company and a pizza take-away.

The loss of this unused retail unit will not materially affect the viability of this decaying retail parade, on the eastern edge of Cemetery Junction.

THIS STATEMENT IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
APPLICATION TO DETERMINE IF PRIOR APPROVAL IS REQUIRED.