

Flood Risk Assessment

Site Address: 20 Coldicutt Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DU

Planning Ref.: 200129

Application: Change of use from A1 to C3 Dwellinghouse (Flat x 1). Prior Notification under Class M, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995* (as amended).

Description of Proposal:

The existing property, 20 Coldicutt Street, is a two-storey Victorian mid-terrace house, with outbuildings to the rear of the property. In the early-20th century, the Ground Floor of the property was converted from its original use as part of the dwellinghouse to become a butcher's shop, which has remained in this use to the present day. The First Floor remains in use as a dwellinghouse flat, and is accessed from Mill Road to the rear of the property.

The property's use as a butcher's shop has led to significant changes in the character of the garden area to the rear of the property, which has been covered entirely by hardstanding areas, and accommodates two standalone cold store units covered by a large canopied area and ancillary shed.

Due to the property's location away from main thoroughfares, traffic-calming measures which have made site access less convenient, and a lack of parking amenity due to double yellow lines outside the property and permit parking in the wider area, the Ground Floor butcher's shop has proved difficult to maintain as a viable business location. The proposal therefore seeks to revert the Ground Floor of the property to its original use as a dwellinghouse, to provide much-needed residential accommodation to the Caversham area.

Existing Flood Risk:



The Environment Agency have identified that the site lies within **Flood Zone 3b** (Functional Floodplain).

The map above shows that the site has a **medium** risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. This means that each year the chance of the site flooding from river water is between 1 and 3.3%, taking into account flood defences in the area.

However, the Flood Warning Information Service notes that the flood risk stated above is not property-specific, and is “very unlikely to be reliable for identifying individual properties at risk”. Therefore, measures will be considered in the *Flood Resilience* section of this document to assess the site-specific flood risk to this property.

The site has no recent history of flooding, and last appears to have been affected by flood water from the Thames in 1947.



Extent of flooding from surface water

● High ● Medium ● Low ○ Very low ⊕ Location you selected

The map above shows that the site has a **medium** risk of surface water flooding, based on the highest level of risk within a 20m-radius of the location shown above. This means that each year the chance of the site flooding from surface water is between 1 and 3.3%.

The Flood Warning Information Service website notes that the probability of flooding by surface water is difficult to predict, as “the probability will depend on rainfall volume and location”, and is “more widespread in areas with harder surfaces, such as concrete.”

Continued overleaf.

Flood Resilience:

The following measures will be considered in the design of this proposal to reduce the risk of flooding to the development:

- The Environment Agency note that the change of use involves a change to a 'more vulnerable' use. However, as the *Description of Proposal* text notes, the proposal is to revert the property back to its original use as a dwellinghouse. This will be in keeping with the predominant use of the properties on Coldicutt Street, and is also in line with other shop-to-dwelling conversions of neighbouring properties at 18 Coldicutt Street (application ref. 030724), 117-119 King's Road (application ref. 950521) and 353 Gosbrook Road (application ref. 150863).
- Whilst the above statement does not increase the property's flood resilience in any way, it should be noted that the planning references listed above are within the immediate context of the property, and set a precedent in favour of shop-to-dwelling conversions in the area.
- This application is considered to be a 'minor development', and so does not require the sequential test to be applied.
- The application does not propose to change any existing finished floor levels within the property.
- All new sockets and power provision will be installed at least 450mm above finished floor levels, and it is recommended that sockets be installed at a higher level to allow for any future climate change.
- The proposal includes amendments to the rear garden, including the removal of a large canopy area covering two cold store units and a standalone shed outbuilding. These removals result in a built footprint reduction of 45m².
- The existing rear of the property is covered entirely by non-permeable hardstanding surfaces.
- The proposal seeks to provide new grass areas and permeable surfaces to improve the ability of the site to cope with the impact of surface water and flash floods. Removing the existing hardstanding areas and built footprint will also serve to reduce the impact of surface water flooding on all neighbouring properties.
- A new ancillary outbuilding is proposed for use by the Ground Floor flat, with a footprint of 24m². Considering the removal of existing outbuildings, the proposal still results in a reduction in built area on the property of 21m².
- The new outbuilding will have a finished floor level that matches the existing building.
- New rainwater drainage for the outbuilding will drain to a new soakaway in the proposed grass area.
- The existing access and egress routes for the development remain unchanged in the proposal.

Summary:

With the above points taken into consideration, the proposed change of use is not considered to increase the risk of flooding to the property, and the proposals should have a positive impact on the ability of the floodplain to cope with floodwater.

The proposals will result in a smaller built footprint on the property than the existing condition, which will reduce the impact of floodwater on neighbouring properties. The removal of existing hardstanding areas and their replacement with permeable grass surfaces will also increase the site's ability to store and dissipate floodwater.

This application sits within a context of shop-to-dwelling conversions in the immediate area, and the change of use will not adversely affect the floodplain, or its ability to cope with any future water due to climate change.

Raising the Ground Floor levels of the existing property in line with AEP thresholds within an existing building will adversely impact the quality of space and accommodation provided at Ground level for residential use, and will decrease the viability of the ground floor space for use as a dwelling. The current ceiling height of 2495mm is slightly higher than the standard height expected for dwellings, and any reduction in this height by raising the floor to suit estimated climate change allowances will severely diminish the quality of the Ground Floor space.

Raising floor levels would therefore not be reasonable or amenable to the use of the development. It should be noted that the floor level of the existing building will be common to many of the properties along Coldicutt Street, which were built at the same time as the property in question and are of consistent design.

This therefore means that the use of the Ground Floor of 20 Coldicutt Street for dwelling will present a condition no worse than any of the surrounding dwellings, and this change of use will not adversely affect any of the neighbouring properties.

The existing access and egress routes will not be affected by the proposals, and these routes are deemed to be acceptable for the proposal.