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Design & Access Statement

for:-

Norcot Water Tower Store Conversion
to 1 Dwellinghouse with associated parking and
cycle parking.

job ref:- 556

October 2019



Summary.

The proposed development will comprise part 1, part 1½ storey building for 1 x 1 bed dwelling house in an under-utilized water tower store for the neighbouring Water Tower. The development is provided with surface parking for 1 car with direct access off Norcote Road.

Application Documents.

- Drawing no. 554-01-00, 554-02-00, 554-02-01, 554-02-05, 554-02-10 & 554-03-10.
- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Application Form

Site Analysis - Existing Site Description.

The existing site of approx. 0.069 hectares comprises of an existing Water Tower (currently 6 apartments) and water tower store with parking and an overgrown landscaped area. There is a single tree growing close to the water tower store. Rear and side boundaries of the property generally comprise wood panel fences.

Limited works will be involved to form a new vehicular access as it is already existing and refuse/pedestrian access.



Site Analysis - Surrounding Area Description.

The site is located in a residential urban area, most typically of traditional construction of facing brick and/or rendered elevations of varying ages.

Site Analysis - Existing Services Transport, Amenities, Sustainability.

The site lies within two and half miles of the city centre and 10 minute walk to Tilehurst District Centre also Norcot Road is located along high frequency bus routes. It's close to the Park Lane and main A4 Bath Road transport corridor and within easy walking distance of the leisure amenities of Victoria & Belgrave Recreation Grounds and Mcllroy Park and lies within an area recognised for housing. It is well served by all statutory services, therefore representing an eminently sustainable location.

Client Requirements.

The client requirement is for the redevelopment of the existing single garage and storage to form a single 1 bed dwelling, with car and cycle parking, private amenity spaces and with refuse/recycling storage.

Planning History

An application (08/01081/FUL) was made for the conversion of this water tower store, it was refused for the following reasons:-

REASONS FOR REFUSAL

1. *The proposed conversion of the existing bike store to a caretaker flat is considered to represent a cramped and incongruous form of development, particularly should the residential development on the adjacent site, approved under 06/00300/FUL, be implemented, which is a material consideration. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Planning Policy Statements PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) and PPS 3 (Housing) and policies HSG 5 (Residential Design Standards) and CUD 14 (Standards of Design in Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (1998) and policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the Core Strategy Document (2008), 'the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance Space Around Dwellings.*

The revised design offers a larger dwellings and no extensions or significant external alterations. The floor area is circa some 15 sqm bigger over two floors which offers a substantially better level of accommodation than previously proposed.

2. *| The proposed alterations to the existing store to enable its use for residential accommodation will have an adverse effect on the setting of the Listed Water Tower and is therefore contrary to policy CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) of the Core Strategy Document (2008)*

The external appearance of the storage unit will not change as a result of the conversion, so the impact on the listed water tower will be minimal other than the additional residential use.

3. *The Council considers that applicant has failed to justify the use of the property for a caretaker and therefore there is no exceptional reason to accept a lower standard of residential amenity for the future occupier. The proposed unit is not supplied with adequate useable and private amenity space and is therefore contrary to policy HSG5 (Residential Design Standards) and CUD14 (Standards of Design and Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (1998)*

For the last ten years the accommodation has not been used to serve the converted water tower, instead it has been used by the landlord for storage unrelated to the water tower accommodation.

4 *The proposed layout results in the unit having poor outlook into or over an amenity area and poor internal amenity The Council considers that applicant has failed to justify the use of the property for a caretaker and therefore there is no exceptional reason to accept a lower standard of residential amenity for the future occupier. the proposal is considered to be inappropriate for residential development and contrary to Policies HSG5 (Residential Design Standards) and CUD14 (Standards of Design and Development) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (1998)*

The additional floor area and first floor window improves the quality of the accommodation and outlook for inhabitants. Improved landscaping and parking area to the front will also benefit the outlook of future occupants

5. *In the absence of a completed legal agreement to secure contributions towards transport (Reading Urban Area Package), local recreation/leisure and education infrastructure improvements the proposal fails to deal with its direct impact and is*

contrary to Policy TRN11b (Development and Traffic) of the Reading Borough Local Plan (1998), Policy CS9 (Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities) of the LDF Core Strategy (2008) and 'Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country

The current local planning policy does not seek affordable housing contributions for conversion works, so in this instance there should be no contribution required.

Planning Policy

The NPPF supports the conversion of existing buildings as a sustainable form of development

148. The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Affordable housing should not be sought for small scale conversion projects

63. Provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing Contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.

Proposals.

As described in the Site Analysis, this site lies within a residential area in an eminently sustainable location and, in view of the surrounding development and facilities, represents a prime opportunity to bring this building back into beneficial use.

The main alterations to the current form will be the windows and doors. The current "Garage Doors" will be replaced with glazing (Patio doors) other windows and doors will only be replaced where needed and repaired / renovated in all other instances.



Existing Building

The materials chosen are also reflective of the local area and existing buildings.

The cycle store housing is located in a small pitched roof timber enclosure located next to the water tower store and behind the Water Tower thus masking it from view from Norcote Road. To enable easy access, there will be a pathway provided across the grounds with 8 X bike stands provided for the proposed development and the existing Water Tower residents.

6 x Water Tower
1 x Proposed New Dwelling
1 x Visitor

Access, Parking, Highways.

The parking area is currently use as a parking area for the landlord the rest of the hardstanding / pea shingle will be removed to allow private amenity area for the dwelling.

The access will remain as current.

Amenity, Landscaping, Trees.

The existing tree will remain and the site will be re-planted with a more conducive planting layout to maximize the use of the site whilst still retaining a good level of planting and screening to the new development and its amenity spaces to the sides and front of the development.

Sustainability.

It has been described that the site is in a sustainable location in respect of transport and amenities, within an existing residential area. It is therefore suited to intensification of use of urban land without detriment to surrounding developments and amenities.

The reuse and improvement of the current building is a sustainable method of providing additional housing. The building will conform to all Building Regulations.

Garden space has been provided around the entire site and logical parking arrangement

The cycle storage allows for 1 bicycle per unit.

Conclusions and Summary.

The site is located in a sustainable residential location, Existing local and national policies encourage the intensification of residential use in suitable areas, of which this has been shown to be one.

Thus, this proposed dwelling in an under used building is eminently suited for redevelopment and modernising to allow conversion from storage to residential use.