

**PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF SECOND FLOOR
FROM SUI GENERIS (BEAUTY SALON) TO C3 RESIDENTIAL**

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

16 BRIDGE STREET, CAVERSHAM, READING RG4 8AA



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been produced to support a full planning application for the Second Floor, 16 Bridge Street, Caversham, Reading (“the Property”) which forms part of 16 Bridge Street, Caversham, Reading (“the Building”) from Sui Generis (Beauty Salon) Use to Use Class C3 (Residential) for 1 x 2 bedroom apartment.
- 1.2 No external alterations are proposed to the Building as part of this application.
- 1.3 This document sets out to explain the planning history, current policy and the rationale behind the proposed new use.
- 1.4 In accordance with statutory and local information requirements, the following supporting material is submitted, and will enable a full assessment of the proposals to be undertaken:
 - 1.4.1 Block Plan;
 - 1.4.2 Location Plan;
 - 1.4.3 Existing Plans;
 - 1.4.4 Proposed Plans;
 - 1.4.5 Waste Storage Plan; and
 - 1.4.6 Flood Risk Assessment.
- 1.5 In brief the Applicant acquired the Property in 2009 where the Building was in use as an estate agent on the ground floor, offices on the first and second floor. In 2010 following planning approval the second floor became used as a beauty salon. The ground and first floor have been in the same use for in excess of 20 years, whilst prior to change of use of the second floor to Sui Generis (Beauty Salon), the space was utilised as offices. Today the Applicant has secured prior approval for the conversion of the first floor to two residential apartments and considers that it is now inappropriate for the second floor to continue to operate as a beauty salon and therefore wishes to “tidy up” the Building by changing the use of the second floor to Use Class C3 (Residential) for 1 x 2 bedroom apartment.
- 1.6 Overall this Statement will demonstrate that, on balance, this proposal represents a planning gain for the Building and surrounding area and will breathe new life and investment into the Building, which is highly visible as the St Peters Conservation

Area is entered just over the Caversham Bridge. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission should be granted.

2. BUILDING / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The Property is located on the West side of Bridge Street as you approach Caversham centre. The submitted Block Plan and Location Plan show the location of the Building and the Existing Plans show the layout of the Property on the second floor within the Building.
- 2.2 The Property was used as a beauty salon between December 2010 until March 2017. After termination of the lease by the tenant, the Property was temporarily utilised on a no rent basis to a local individual, until such time that the Applicant could source a new tenant, which took almost 2 years (23 months).
- 2.3 The Property is located within a District and Community Centre, albeit on the edge of the area. Nearby operators include Riverside Dental Centre, estate agents Philip Baker, Martin & Co and Masons, a local jewellery shop, Nash & Co, locksmiths Caversham Cobler and Salon One estate agents. Many of the properties in the immediate vicinity already have upper parts in residential use including 2, 4, 6 and 14 Bridge Street which is located directly next to the Property.
- 2.4 The Property benefits from a central location within easy walking distance of both Caversham Centre, Reading Town Centre and the mainline train station which provides connections countrywide. The Building is therefore highly accessible and on well-served bus routes, with a bus stop located directly opposite the Property.

3. PLANNING HISTORY FOR BUILDING

- 3.1 Planning history comprises of the following:

- 3.1.1 16/11/2018 | Application Reference 182017

- Change of use of first floor from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 2 x 1 bed apartments. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended).

- Application permitted 14/01/19.

- 3.1.2 02/09/2014 | Application Reference 141411

Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for a Proposed use or development. Change of use of A2 second floor into 2 flats.

Application refused 30/10/14 given that the Applicant was unable to demonstrate that the Building was entirely in Class A2 use.

3.1.3 11/06/2014 | Application Reference 140927

Change of use from D1 to A2 of Second Floor.

Application permitted 14/08/2014 although not instigated by Applicant or occupier.

3.1.4 20/03/2014 | Application Reference 140418

Change of use of first floor from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 2 x 1 bed flats.

Application permitted 12/05/2014 although not instigated by Applicant.

3.1.5 29/11/2013 | Application Reference 131668

Change of use of first floor from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 2 x 1 bed flats.

Application refused 21/02/2014 although later permitted under application reference 140418 (see clause 3.1.5 above).

3.1.6 19/08/2013 | Application Reference 131192

Change of use of first and second floors from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise 2 x 1 bed flats and 2 x studio flats.

Application withdrawn by Applicant 10/10/2013.

3.1.7 29/09/2010 | Application Reference 101951

Change of use of second floor from Financial / Professional Services (A2) to Beauty Salon (Sui Generis).

Application permitted 10/12/2010.

3.1.8 06/06/2010 | Application Reference 100447

1 illuminated front fascia and 1 illuminated projecting sign for ground floor estate agents.

Application permitted 03/08/2010.

3.1.9 13/12/1999 | Application Reference 991892

Provision of illuminated projecting sign.

Application permitted 25/01/2000.

3.1.10 11/09/1997 | Application Reference 970963

Internally illuminated fascia sign.

Application permitted 21/10/1997.

4. PROPOSAL

4.1 The Applicant is the freehold owner of the Property and is seeking to improve the Building by undertaking a refurbishment of the upper floors of the Building to change the overall use to residential.

4.2 As is well established by the Applicant from other developments within the Town, the Applicant is experienced with undertaking high quality works to deliver quality accommodation and this is also intended for this Building.

4.3 Under current planning approvals in place the makeup of the Building could be as follows:

- Ground Floor: Estate Agents;
- First Floor: Residential
- Second Floor: Beauty Salon

The Applicant does not consider that having residential accommodation nestled below a Beauty Salon is appropriate, nor good practice and feels that the public access via the communal areas of the Building which forms part of the Beauty Salon is not conducive to having residential accommodation on the first floor.

4.4 If this application is approved it will enable the Applicant to implement its permission under application reference 182017 and ensure that all space above the ground floor is converted to residential, which is a recognised approach for buildings of this nature.

- 4.5 No external alterations are proposed as part of this application. Planning permission is, therefore, only required for the change of use of the Property from Sui Generis (Beauty Salon) to Class C3 (Residential).

5. PLANNING POLICIES

- 5.1 The Development Plan for the area consists of the Reading Borough Core Strategy ("RBCS") (adopted in 2008 and amended in 2015) and the Reading Sites and Details Policies Document ("SDPD") (adopted in 2012).
- 5.2 The Core Strategy Policies Document has been carefully reviewed and considered in respect of this application and the following comments are made specifically:
- 5.2.1 Policy CS4 requires the development to be accessible by a choice of modes of transport. The Property is located within walking distance of both Caversham and Reading Centres, opposite a bus station and within easy walking distance of the mainline station within the town.
 - 5.2.2 Policy CS14 provides for an increase in residential dwellings, and whilst small, this application will deliver 1 additional home to the borough.
- 5.3 The Sites and Detailed Policies Document has been carefully reviewed and considered in respect of this application and the following comments are made specifically:
- 5.3.1 Policy DM8, whilst not specifically relevant given that the conversion is not originating from residential use the application is considered to comply with all aspects of this strategy, specifically:
 - 5.3.1.1 there are no changes to the external appearance of the Building which would cause the physical character of the area to alter;
 - 5.3.1.2 the building is not in use presently as a single-family dwelling;
 - 5.3.1.3 there are only positive impacts to neighbouring residential properties given that presently the Property is in commercial use;
 - 5.3.1.4 the works to be undertaken to complete the conversion would be undertaken in accordance with all Building Control requirements;
 - 5.3.1.5 there is bin storage of an appropriate size and standard available on the ground floor and for bicycle storage the Applicant proposes that any occupier utilises a fold up bicycle; and

5.3.1.6 the proposal is for a two-bedroom apartment, the largest that can fit into the space in question.

6. HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 There are no planned changes to the external parts of the Building and therefore the Applicant does not consider that the change of use will have any negative impact on the Conservation Area

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The proposal is for the change of use of the Property from Sui Generis (Beauty Salon) to Use Class C3 (Residential) for 1 x two-bedroom apartment.
- 7.2 Other than for the unusual existing use, it would have been possible under the previous use (B1a Offices) to apply for permitted development to make the conversion, similar to the first floor. As a result, the Applicant considers that this is excellent grounds for the application to be granted.
- 7.3 The prior approval application (reference 182017) was welcomed by the Caversham & District Residents Association (CADRA) who welcomed new upper floor uses within the Conservation Area. Therefore, given that approval of this application would enable a sensible new upper floor use (the same as that in neighbouring properties) and the Applicant has satisfied the concern regarding waste storage with waste being stored to the rear of the Building until collection day.
- 7.4 Many of the properties in the immediate vicinity already have upper parts in residential use including 2, 4, 6 and 14 Bridge Street which is located directly next to the Property.
- 7.5 Without approval there is a risk that the Building becomes dis-jointed by having residential units nestled in between two commercial units (second floor and ground floor) which is not appropriate. Approval of the application will enable a dedicated residential conversion of all upper floors, enhancing the local area and providing much needed housing for the local area.
- 7.6 Overall this Statement has demonstrated that the proposed change of use is compliant with the provisions of the local planning policies. It is considered that there are no reasons why planning permission should be withheld, and therefore it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.