

Planning Statement

26-28, Southampton Street Reading RG1 2QL

Project Ref 8717

Date. October 2018

1.0.0. The site & its surroundings

The site consists a two/three storey Grade II Listed building which has been the subject of extensions & alterations over the last century.

The property is situated at the northern end of Southampton Street on the junction with the IDR & opposite The Oracle shopping Centre.

Directly to the south there is a vacant piece of land incorporating advertising signs which was recently sold & is probably going to be developed for residential use in the near future subject to planning consent.

There is currently a planning application in to redevelop the Red Lion public house as a four-storey flatted scheme.

To the south west St Giles Court has in the main been converted from B1a office use into self-contained flats under Class O of the General Development Order 2015.

The property is close to St Giles Church & the Market Place/London Road Conservation Area.

The site is currently used as a B1a office for Sharps Commercial agents who have resided in this building for the last 26 years. Access is via Mundesley Street from Southampton Street.

1.1.0. The Proposal

The proposal is to sensitively convert the building from B1a into;

- 1no 1bedroom flat on the ground floor accessed from the rear.
- 1no 2 bedroom flat on the first & second floors accessed from the front.
- 1no 1 bedroom house with access from the front & rear.

Three parking spaces are proposed accessed from Mundesley Street.

A small rear garden area is provided to the house with a defensible space provided to the rear of the ground floor flat.

Secure cycle storage is provided.

Convenient bin storage is provided.

1.2.0. The Design

The design has been carefully considered so that the alterations are kept to a minimum. The current layout lends itself to the conversion with negligible interference with the listed building.

The panelled rooms on the ground floor to flat one remains intact with no alterations. A small en-suite is formed off bedroom 1 which extends under the existing staircase.

There is very little disturbance to the first/second floor flat, the first to second floor stairs is enclosed & the stud wall continued to provide a bathroom.

The original wall is extended to form the party wall on the ground floor & is intact on the first floor.

The only alteration to form the house is to provide a bathroom on the first floor alongside the second staircase.

There are no alterations intended to the elevations.

The rear yard is altered to provide small amenity areas, parking, cycle & bin storage.

The frontage is left intact apart from the provision of new railings to separate the house from the ground floor flat. These will match the existing pattern.

1.3.0. The Layout

The proposed internal arrangements work well as the rooms are stacked over one another & apart from the second-floor bedroom to flat 2 the others enjoy rear facing windows which can be opened in a quieter environment.

There are no internal communal areas & the external amenity areas are allocated to the adjacent house/flat.

1.4.0. The Scale

The scale of the building has not altered.

1.5.0. Landscaping

The frontage is proposed to be left intact.

The rear area will be hard landscaped enclosed with close boarded fencing with lockable access gates.

1.6.0. Appearance

The appearance of the building will remain unchanged. It is proposed to carry out refurbishment works to the roof & rainwater goods which is due in any event.

1.7.0. Refuse Storage

Formal refuse storage is provided as shown.

1.9.0 Parking & Cycling

The site is located within Zone 2, the primary core area on the periphery of Zone 1, the central core area.

The parking standards are met as the scheme is providing 1 car parking space per unit.

Secure cycle parking is provided to the rear, 2no for the 1 bed house & 1no for each flat.

1.10.0 Appraising the context

The current use of the property is B1a. Sharps commercial have occupied the building since 1992.

The building is not ideally suited to a modern office environment & they now need to relocate to meet the demands & perceptions of a modern & expanding business.

Please see the letter from Anthony Sharp the owner of the building within Appendix 1 the efforts to dispose of the building which to date have been unsuccessful as the current B1 use.

The internal areas of the building are not suited to a modern office environment with steep stairs & low headroom, particularly on the first & second floors.

There are steps within the ground floor, all which limit the building to less abled persons.

Assessing the site against CS11

- (i) Is access by a choice of means of transport, including access to the strategic road network, poor, and likely to remain poor?
- (ii) Is the continued use of the site for employment, including the potential for redevelopment for employment uses, viable?
- (iii) Is there a surplus of a similar size and type of accommodation in Reading?
- (iv) Would continued employment use of the site detrimentally affect the amenity and character of a residential area?
- (v) Is the need for alternative uses stronger than the need for the retention of employment land?
- (vi) Would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme?

- When assessing the site against the 6no items above, the site is within easy reach of the town centre & public transport.
- The continued use for Employment is proving difficult due to the nature of the building, its layout for modern office use. It cannot be altered due to its Listed nature.
- There is plenty of alternative modern offices within the Reading area.
- All around the site, public houses & offices are & have been converted in residential accommodation.
- We believe the need to residential accommodation is stronger in this instance than retaining it for Employment use. The Applicant has advertised the building for some time with no success as a B1a office, evidence has been provided.
- There is no possibility of a more comprehensive use on this site due to the restricted area & its Listed nature.

2.0.0. Flooding

The site location is within the Flood zone & a Flood Risk Assessment is enclosed.

3.0.0. Noise

As all the bedrooms are dual or single aspect overlooking the rear apart from the second bedroom on the second floor of flat 2.

In the main this should ensure the noise levels are low on the rear elevation when the window is opened for ventilation.

Within the loft of the second bedroom in flat 2, it is proposed to install a PIV ventilation unit such as the Nuaire, this does not require any external vents but relies on the ventilation through the roof void.

As the existing windows cannot be replaced owing to the building being Listed, secondary double glazing is proposed on the front & rear elevations.

The selectaglaze system is recognised as a suitable product to use to improve sound & acoustic properties to single glazed joinery. Please see the product on www.selectaglaze.co.uk. This product can produce a minimum sound insulation of 36dBA on the Southampton Street elevation with a 32dBA on the other elevations.

4.0.0. Air Quality

As the alterations are minimal within the construction phase mitigation should be quite simple & will include;

- The construction of a solid barrier around the site.
- Switch off vehicles when waiting on site.
- Employ dust suppression techniques during site operations & ensure dust suppression equipment is accessible.
- The car use from the proposed development is not likely to be as frequent as the B1 office use as the site is in a highly sustainable location.

5.0.0. 106 Contributions

In this instance, no contributions will apply as the conversion creates less than 10 units of accommodation.

6.0.0 CIL

CIL form enclosed.

7.0.0. Conclusions

The Listed building is not ideally suited to a modern-day office environment & has proved not to be popular when marketed apart from residential conversion.

The conversion has a minimum affect on the fabric of the Listed Building.

The layout complies with the Council Policy in relation to stacking/layout & parking.

It is important to keep this building in a beneficial use, as surrounding building are being converted & redeveloped to a residential use, this is an appropriate conversion.

8.0.0. Outline works to convert building from B1c to C3

The design of this conversion only necessitates minor alterations to the listed building as follows;

See marked up drawings Ref. PL04 & PL-06

- Infilling will be formed in timber studwork.
- The first floor will be upgraded by the installation of chicken wire & RW2 Rockwool batts laid between the joists with a soft layer over. This will only necessitate the removal of the floor boards which will be reinstated.
- New electrical services will be installed which will be aided by the removal of first floor boards.
- Secondary double glazing will be provided as discussed in the planning statement.
- As the building is Listed, there is no requirement to upgrade the external walls.