

Addington House, 73 London Street Reading RG1 4QA

Loss Of Employment Statement

2695 011A

Loss Of Employment - Background

The immediate area has a mix of uses, and the building adjoins residential at the back, retail to one side and a leisure use on the other.

The building has no shopfront, as it was originally residential, and the proposal returns it to its historic use.

The statement at the end of this document makes clear, the existing site employs only 5 full-time-equivalent workers. Two of the floors are empty.

Due to surplus supply of offices we strongly believe that the conversion of the subject property to its ORIGINAL USE (residential) will better serve the community and will be an effective help to alleviate the pressure from housing shortage.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

Paragraph 22. Planning policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose. Land allocations should be regularly reviewed. Where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for the allocated employment use, applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.

Paragraph 51. Local planning authorities should identify and bring back into residential use empty housing and buildings in line with local housing and empty homes strategies and, where appropriate, acquire properties under compulsory purchase powers. They should normally approve planning applications for change to residential use and any associated development from commercial buildings (currently in the B use classes) where there is an identified need for additional housing in that area, provided that there are not strong economic reasons why such development would be inappropriate.

Loss Of Employment – Justification against Policy

The site is not in a core employment area, where Policy CS11 states that the overall level of employment land should be maintained.

When assessed against the criteria for loss of Employment land outside these areas, the following should be noted:

1. Access by car at general office hours is not good. A residential use would reduce the number of parking spaces, and increase the number of bicycle spaces. As stated in Paragraph 5.12, "Growth in employment spaces ... should be supported by growth in housing levels, in order to prevent increases in ... commuting distances". There is ample employment for the residents in designated Core Employment Areas within walking distance of the site, so this objective is supported by the proposal. The railway station is also within walking distance.
2. The site has not been formally marketed for employment use, but there is no shortage locally of space much more suitable for office use. Modern expectations for cabling, lighting and mechanical services are hard to achieve in a Grade II* listed building. It is also impossible to properly provide for physically disabled workers or visitors, as the entrance is up a flight of steps.
3. There is a surplus of similar size and type of accommodation in Reading.
4. The site is in a central area where traffic congestion, and its attendant pollution, is a problem. A residential use would spread what traffic movements there are over a wider range of times, outside peak hours.
5. There is a shortage of opportunities to provide quality housing in Reading. Many residential developments which are conversions from office use consist of extremely small units of low quality. The proposed flats are generously sized and will be of high quality.
6. The area is extremely mixed, and there is residential use adjoining the site, so this will not be an 'island'.

Statement by Applicant Regarding Current Use

The following statement has been made by our client to justify the concern of loss of employment in the Pre-Application.

"The owners of Addington House, and ex Directors (David Hasler and Karen Eden) formally of Oculus (currently the company occupying Addington House) have been winding the company down with view to retirement and/or a sale of the business for some time. Both Directors of Oculus and owners of Addington House, stepped down as Directors on the 1st February 2018, having successfully sold the business to its

new owners. Permanent staffing levels as of this date were only five (excluding the Directors as noted above).

The ongoing business and new owners have taken on the current lease of Addington House, but this lease ends in March 2019. The intention of the new owners of Oculus is not to extend this lease beyond March 2019 but to relocate and find alternative and smaller office space in the Reading area before March 2019, or at the latest by the end date of the current lease agreement.

In summary with the former Directors having stepped down/retired and the relocation planned for the current business occupying Addington House, there is no expected loss of employment envisaged associated with this application to convert Addington House to residential in 2019."