

190 – The development of the
former County Arms,
84 Watlington Street, Reading,
RG1 4RT

Design & Access Statement

On behalf of Hayward-Nevitt

Rev 1

Date: 1st March 2016

Proposed Development

The proposed development is for conversion of the Former County Arms, 84 Watlington Street, Reading, RG1 4RT.

This application is for the conversion and extension of the former building into 10 residential dwellings. The application builds upon previous consents secured which are:-

11/00110/FUL – Original application – Extension and conversion of existing building to create 1xstudio, 6x1-bed flats, 3x2 – bed flats and associated works including parking, amenity space and landscaping – (appeal ref APP/E0345/A/11a2152843)

12/00752/APPCON – Application for approval of details pursuant to Conditions 3,4,6,11 and 12 of planning permission 11/00110/FUL

14/1416/VAR – Application for removal or variation of a condition following grant of planning permission. (11/00110/FUL)

Design & Appearance

The appearance and design of the building conversion is almost identical to the previous consents, this application therefore should be considered to reflect a low degree of planning consideration. All matters concerning the design and appearance, set out to the original Design and Access Statement, prepared by Consensus Planning, are to apply. This Design and Access Statement has been adhered to this statement.

This application does not intend to alter the previous consented reserved matters from application 11/00110/FUL, consented under applications 12/00752/APPCON & 14/1416/VAR. The proposed changes below does not alter this consents and development will be carried out adhering to these consents.

Main application changes

- Increasing the development numbers from 9 (secured under application 14/1416/VAR) to 10 (as secured under application 11/00110/FUL)
- Alterations to the unit sizes and type as listed in the use and amount section below
- The additional dwelling is formed by converting the basement cycle store and adding a patent glazed section of roof to the front of the building
- High level windows have been added to the basement dwellings
- The cycle store has been relocated to the car park
- The parking and landscaping has been altered to allow 10 parking spaces.

- Introduction of Bi-fold doors to unit 6

Use & Amount

The proposed use of the building is residential C3, as consented in previous applications.

The total Gross Internal Area of the existing building is 232msq, the total Gross Internal Area of the proposed scheme is 528sqm, and this is a Net increase of 296msq.

The proposed schedule of accommodation is:-

Unit 1 – 2-bed 55msq

Unit 2 – 1-bed 40msq

Unit 3 – 2-bed 68msq

Unit 4 – 2-bed 65msq

Unit 5 – 1-bed 49msq

Unit 6 – 2-bed 75msq

Unit 7 – 1-bed 41msq

Unit 8 – 1-bed 42msq

Unit 9 – 2-bed 91msq

Unit 10 – 1-bed 42msq

Conclusion

This application represents a small variation to the original consents and makes very minor changes to the external appearance. The increase of 1 net until, as per the original application, should equally be considered a very minor change. We therefore conclude that this application should be considered as reasonable and compliant with local planning policies.



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduces the new requirement for a statement covering design concepts and principles together with access issues to be submitted with all planning applications. This new requirement took effect on 10th August 2006.

This statement responds to this requirement and ensures that the design and access requirements associated with the proposed development are duly considered.

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in the context of the advice in DCLG Circular 01/2006 (Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System) wherein Section 3 sets out the requirements for these documents. It therefore adopts the various headings included within the Circular and has been prepared in accordance with the CABE guidance for writing Design and Access Statements.

ASSESSMENT

The site is located just 0.8km to the south of Reading Town Centre and approximately 1.3km from Reading main line station (less than a 20 minute walk). Additionally, it is located in close proximity to main bus routes running along London Road and Queen's Road.

The site is located 35 metres from the junction of Watlington Street and London Road, and borders residential properties and a petrol filling station.

The existing two storey building located on the site operates as a public house with ancillary residential accommodation to the upper floor. The existing building

THE COUNTY ARMS, 84 WATLINGTON STREET, READING

comprises a red brick structure, with mock-Tudor beams to the front elevation and was constructed in the 1930s. The building also has a clay tiled roof.

The site includes a hard surfaced area to the front of the existing building and an extensive car parking area to the rear, accessed from Boulton Street. Additionally, a small garden area exists immediately to the rear of the pub building.

The site is bounded to the south by a petrol filling station, to the north by two storey dwellings and to the rear (west) by Tyrrel Court, a large, 5 storey block of flats providing sheltered accommodation for elderly people.

The main pedestrian entrance to the building is located on the east elevation facing Watlington Street, whilst vehicular entrance to the site is gained from the north, from Boulton Street. The car parking area to the rear wraps around the rear of the adjacent two dwellings (nos. 80 & 82 Watlington Street) which have no rear amenity space or garden.

The surrounding area is mainly residential in nature, with a number of the terraced dwellings on Watlington Street having previously been converted into flats. Additionally, Watlington Street also includes some office uses along with two churches.

The site is located within the Eldon Square conservation area, with the rear boundary of the site forming the western boundary of the conservation area. Four other public houses currently operate within this small conservation area and the existing building is not considered to relate as positively to the surrounding character as the others as it was constructed much later. Much of the conservation area was developed in the mid-19th Century, some 70 – 80 years earlier.

It is considered that an application for residential redevelopment would make the most efficient use of this brownfield site. Converting this building will better reflect

the character, appearance and features of the surrounding street scene and conservation area.

INVOLVEMENT

This application has been revised when compared to both the previously dismissed appeal and more recent pre-application advice received from the Local Planning Authority. These discussions are detailed in the covering letter in greater detail.

Residential development on the site is acceptable in principle, there is no objection to the loss of the public house, this was confirmed at the previous Planning Appeal, when a public consultation took place.

EVALUATION

The building is to be retained so as to continue the sites relationship to the Conservation Area. The form, scale, detailing and use of materials to form a modest extension to the rear have been carefully considered to ensure that the resulting building will have a positive impact on the continued preservation and enhancement of this part of the Conservation Area.

DESIGN

Design has been an important consideration in preparing this application and the rationale has extended from an assessment of the site constraints together with the opportunity for delivering an enhanced street scene within this conservation area context whilst providing a high quality living environment for future occupiers.

The layout of the development has been designed to respect the existing building. As noted above, the impact on adjacent neighbouring occupiers has been carefully considered at the design stage, assessing window positions and outlook of the adjoining 80 & 82 Watlington Street in particular.

Although this is an urban site, the layout incorporates a landscaped communal amenity space to the rear of the site (west facing). This would be carefully landscaped to maximize its usability for future occupiers and provide a more attractive outlook for some of the single aspect flats in Tyrrel Court to the rear. Of equal importance is the landscaped area introduced at the front of the site to significantly enhance the street scene in this Conservation Area replacing a hard landscaped area.

It is recognized rooflights are not prevalent in the Watlington Street street scene so these have been kept to a minimum, dormer windows are excluded completely fronting Watlington Street.

USE

The proposed use is for residential flats contained within a single building. A residential use is considered wholly appropriate in this predominantly residential area and the principle has been accepted by Officers and an Appeal Inspector.

The development takes into account the proximity of local amenities, the town centre and public transport, proposing small one and two bedroom dwellings for households less reliant on the need for a car.

AMOUNT

The proposal involves the creation of 10 one and two bedroom flats. It is proposed to provide off-street parking spaces to the rear of the site, accessed via the existing crossover from Boulton Street. This would reduce the parking area compared to existing situation, however the proposed provision would respond to advice received at the pre-application stage and reflect car ownership levels in this area.

A predominance of one bedroom flats is proposed to maximize affordability and reduce potential sales resistance due to the adjoining petrol station.

It is also considered demand and reliance on car ownership will be lower amongst one bedroom flats, maximizing the benefits of this sustainable location.

LAYOUT

The existing front building line will be retained as part of the proposed development and the relationship to neighbouring buildings will be largely unchanged from the existing situation. The layout of the car parking and amenity space to the rear will substantially improve this area, reducing the hard surfaced area for parking and providing a high quality landscaped area for communal use by future residents. Also providing an opportunity for the introduction of new trees visible from existing dwellings in Boulton Street and Tyrrel Court.

SCALE

The scale of the development has been determined by the surrounding buildings and the opportunity for providing a building with a positive enhancement to the character of the surrounding conservation area.

LANDSCAPING

Landscaping and the provision of a usable amenity space to the rear has been integral to the design of the overall scheme. Additionally, it is proposed to provide a well designed landscaped area to the front of the building, which can positively contribute to the street scene, although would not provide usable amenity space. Currently the concreted area to the front of the pub detracts from the building and this part of the street scene and it is sought to resolve this as part of the proposed development.

ACCESS

Vehicular access would be gained via the existing access onto Boulton Street and include provision for off-street parking spaces.

The nearest bus stops to the site are located on London Road and Queen's Road, to the opposite ends of Watlington Street. Additionally the mainline railway station is just 1.3km from the site.

Pedestrian access to the site from Watlington Street would remain unchanged from the existing building.

There is a slight drop in levels (around 1 metre) across the site from front to rear and a similar drop in levels from south to north, more noticeable at the rear.

PLANNING COMPLIANCE

It is accepted that the proposed development makes best use of this previously developed site and does so, in a manner described in this statement, by enhancing the appearance of the area with an interesting, traditional building reflecting the area. There would be no detrimental impact on the residential amenity of surrounding occupiers and proposals meet national, regional and local planning policy guidance.

SUMMARY

In summary, this application for 10 flats improves the Boulton Street streetscene and makes a beneficial contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Eldon Square conservation area. The proposed design, proportions and elevational treatment would better relate to the surrounding dwellings and street scene context than the existing building.

The proposal maximizes the potential of the site and incorporates attractive landscaped amenity space to the rear of the development.

THE COUNTY ARMS, 84 WATLINGTON STREET, READING

Car parking demand would be met on-site and the applicant is willing to sign a Section 106 agreement to prevent future occupiers from purchasing parking permits for the surrounding streets.