
**2 PRIORY AVENUE
CAVERSHAM
RG4 7SF**

PLANNING SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Day Tanner Ltd
Suite 1A, Market House
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Wokingham
RG40 1AP

September 2018

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This statement is prepared in support of our detailed planning application for the scheme to change the use of the building from doctors surgery to 4 x 1-bed and 2 x 2-bed flats at 2 Priory Avenue including the removal of walls to the northern end of the building to provide bin and cycle storage.
- 1.2 The site is located on the eastern side of Priory Avenue, on the corner with Church Road and within Caversham village. The site is located approximately 1 km to the north of Reading town centre and is within easy reach of local services and public transport routes. Caversham village is identified as a district centre in the local plan and is dominated by retail uses with a large number of residential uses above shops and adjacent to a large suburban housing area.
- 1.3 We understand there are proposals to include the site within the defined St Peters Conservation Area, but at the time of submission of the application, the site is not within a conservation area nor is the building listed. The site does lie on the northern edge of Flood zone 2.
- 1.4 The use of the site as a GP surgery is no longer sustainable due to the cramped nature of the internal space and there is no possibility within the current building for the practice to follow government guidelines about creating bigger and more multifunctional surgeries. Indeed, the Surgery closed on 30 June 2018 and a letter from the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group to the Head of Planning dated 23 May 2018 confirming that the premises is no longer required for NHS purposes is included with this statement at Appendix A.
- 1.5 This scheme puts forward a viable alternative to the existing use that retains the original building in its setting with associated cycle storage and bin storage and with some communal amenity space. The existing building is in the Arts and Crafts style with many original features which are proposed to be retained and the scheme has been informed by input from the Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA) and others which will be discussed further in this statement.
- 1.6 A similar scheme to that now proposed was subject to a request for pre-application advice in May 2016, which will also be discussed in more detail further in this statement.

2. SITE CONTEXT

- 2.1 As noted, site is located on the eastern side of Priory Avenue, on the corner with Church Road and within Caversham village. The site is located approximately 1 km to the north of Reading town centre and is within easy reach of local services and public transport routes. Caversham village is identified as a district centre in the local plan and is dominated by retail uses with a large number of residential uses above shops and adjacent to a large suburban housing area.
- 2.2 Caversham village is a vibrant and highly sustainable location in which to live with good access by means other than the private motor car and many areas of municipal open space in close proximity.
- 2.3 The building itself was inspected recently by members of CADRA accompanied by Dr Megan Aldrich, a well respected local architectural historian who has worked with CADRA on a number of projects. We are hopeful that Dr Aldrich will provide a full architectural report on the building in due course and which we hope to submit during the course of the application but, in summary, her initial findings are set out below:

It is a very fine example of a village Arts and Crafts house for a patron with enough money to spend on good design and the latest ideas coming from London. In particular, it shows the ideas of C.F.A. Voysey, one of the great Arts and Crafts architects, and the later work of Philip Webb, the internationally important architect and designer who worked closely for many years with William Morris. For anyone who wanted to get more of an idea about these influences, Broadleys in Lake Windermere by Voysey is a classic example of his bold chimneys, white roughcast stucco, and his use of multiple window groupings -- all of which can be seen in more modest style at 2 Priory Avenue.

In addition, Philip Webb's Standen in Sussex, a National Trust property built in the 1890s for a well-to-do lawyer, also offers points of similarity, especially in the use of painted woodwork inside the house, and the creation of a large entrance hall with a 'feature' staircase. The main entrance of the house on Priory Avenue and its galleried hall and staircase are 'knockout' features of this building, and I have not seen a more impressive stair hall even in much larger houses in Caversham and environs. This is a great glory of the house. However, there are also at least three period fireplaces remaining, some cornices, picture rails, and original skirting boards, some wonderful, panelled woodwork

looking very much like Philip Webb at Standen, and a marvelous window seat upstairs at the front. The mouldings around the windows in the old part of the house also appear to be intact, and the grouping of windows -- especially in groups of three -- is completely characteristic of the Arts and Crafts Movement at this time. It really is a very fine building of its kind, and complementary to the listed Arts and Crafts Library just down the street.

'Old Caversham' has Tudor architecture at its core, and the next great wave of building comes with responses to that Tudor history in the late nineteenth century. The Arts and Crafts architects were very conscious of the Tudor period, and it strikes me that 2 Priory Avenue, sitting directly across from the wonderful 'Gardiner's Agency' building, is very much in this tradition. Inside, I noticed today that the woodwork 'screen' over the stairs has three shallow arches, like the screen of a Tudor great hall. There is also the use of prominent timbering in the main door, which is certainly original, as well as the elongated strap hinges -- all features the Arts and Crafts architects get from late medieval and Tudor architecture.

Finally, there is the matter of the stained glass -- a wonderful glass screen with stylised tulips surrounds the inner door, but it is dwarfed by that remarkably tall stained glass window opposite the entrance. These are certainly original features that greatly contribute to the 'wow' factor of the entrance hall along with the original fireplace and the built-in seats -- these can be found in Webb's Standen, which is nearly contemporary to 2 Priory Avenue. This means that Dr Hope was absolutely up to date with national developments in his house in Caversham village.

- 2.4 Photographs taken during that visit can be seen at Appendix B to this statement.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Pre-application advice referenced 160376 was given in May 2016 for a scheme to change the use of the building from doctors surgery to 7 x 1-bed flats and 1 studio apartment including the demolition of a later extension to provide an area of amenity space and bin and cycle storage.
- 3.2 That advice raised a number of matters, including the loss of a community use (doctors surgery) and, given the sites location within the District Centre, why other "centre uses" are not practical or viable in this building. Other matters were raised around the design and layout of the flats proposed in terms of residential amenity, traffic noise/disturbances and air quality and the proposed housing mix.

4 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Having regard to those comments we have reduced the scheme down to 4 x 1-bed and 2 x 2-bed flats including the removal of walls to the northern end of the building to provide bin and cycle storage.
- 4.2 As noted in Section 3 of this statement, there was concern expressed during the previous pre-application process that the scheme did not include any “centre uses” given the sites location within the District Centre. This matter will be discussed further in this statement but we do not see that such a use would be appropriate within this development and that also seems to be the opinion of the CADRA who have been involved in working up this scheme.
- 4.3 An important part of this scheme, and also one that CADRA were very keen on, is the retention of original internal fixtures and fittings within the original building as well as existing fenestration detail and external fabric. With the exception of a new door to the northern end of the original building in place of an existing window to provide an entrance to the flats within the newer extension we are able to achieve that aim and have indicated those features pictorially on our photo sheet 3332/255, as annotated on the proposed floor plans.
- 4.4 A copy of correspondence had with the CADRA over the scheme design is included with this statement at Appendix C, where it identifies the entrance hall, stairway and landing as important spaces within the building and refers to important features including stained glass, fire surrounds, window embrasure seating, paneled doors and joinery, all of which are proposed to be retained.
- 4.5 The room sizes for all flats comply with the Technical housing standards document 2015 and all have access to satisfactory daylight and outlook, which includes a dual aspect for those flats to the southern end of the building in proximity to the protected Magnolia tree.
- 4.6 It is acknowledged that the site is within an AQMA which extends north of the site to Rectory Road and covers a significant area of land to the south through Caversham village and central Reading and measures can be taken to mitigate the effects of poor air quality on future residents. However, where we are seeking to preserve as much of the original fabric and feel of the building such measures may be limited to secondary

glazing but which can be adequately dealt with by way of a condition of consent. Similarly with any noise impacts arising from the location of the site.

- 4.7 Provision is made for bin and cycle storage and we are proposing a car free development with no on-site parking, which seemed to be accepted in the pre-application response and which is becoming more common with new developments within the borough. By not including a retail unit to the southern end of the building the green amenity area around the building is increased and would compensate to an extent for that lost to the north where more of the building is retained over the scheme submitted for pre-application advice.
- 4.8 We consider that the scheme proposed presents an appropriate mix of housing on a brownfield site in a highly sustainable location that would fit comfortably within the local area and from our review of the development plan context, we believe that the scheme is policy compliant.

5 DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

- 5.1 The Development Plan for the area is made up of national planning guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted documents forming part of the Local Development Framework particularly, in this case, the adopted Core Strategy (CS) document and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (SDPD).
- 5.2 One of the main principles of national policy is to concentrate development in sustainable locations. The provision of housing to meet the needs of a sustainable and buoyant economy is also a principle theme.
- 5.3 In terms of the Local Plan context the following policies are considered relevant to this application:
- 5.4 Policy CS31 (Additional and Existing Community Facilities) states that proposals involving the redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses will not be permitted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain that facility.
- 5.5 Policy CS1 (Sustainable Construction and Design) states that proposals for new development, including the construction of new buildings and the redevelopment and refurbishment of existing building stock will be acceptable where the design of buildings

and site layouts use energy, water, minerals, materials and other natural resources appropriately, efficiently and with care and take account of climate change.

- 5.6 Policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm) requires that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located.
- 5.7 Policy CS15 (Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix) states that the appropriate density and mix of residential development within the Borough will be informed by: -
- An assessment of the characteristics, including the mix of uses of the area in which it is located;
 - Its current and future level of accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, as defined in Policy CS4;
 - The need to achieve high quality design in accordance with Policy CS7; and
 - The need to minimise environmental impacts, including detrimental impacts on the amenities of adjoining occupiers.
- 5.8 Policy CS24 (Car/Cycle Parking) indicates that maximum car and cycle parking standards will be applied which relate to the accessibility of the location.
- 5.9 SDPD Policy DM8 (Safeguarding Amenity) seeks to ensure that development does not have a significant detrimental impact on the living environment of existing or new residential properties, in terms of, among other things:
- Privacy and overlooking;
 - Access to sunlight and daylight;
 - Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development.
- 5.10 Policy DM6 (Affordable Housing) requires the provision of 20% affordable housing on sites of 5 – 9 dwellings, subject to viability.
- 5.11 Policy DM10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) requires that new dwellings are provided with functional private or communal open space which for flats can include balconies or roof gardens.

6 POLICY APPRAISAL

6.1 With regard to national policy and guidance the proposal is considered to be an appropriate response to national requirements in design terms and where the proposed development would fulfil the economic, social and environmental roles required by new development as set out below:

An economic role

- Boosts the supply of housing in accordance with paragraph 47 of the NPPF.
- The scheme contributes towards the Council's national requirement to maintain a 5 year housing land supply at all times.
- Provides 6 smaller sized households for smaller families, first time buyers or downsizers, to meet defined housing needs.
- Proposes development that results in an efficient use of land in a sustainable and accessible location in accordance with the NPPF's core principles.
- Offers local employment opportunities in the construction industry. As set out within the Government Housing Strategy for England (2011), for every new home built, up to two new jobs are created for a year.
- Provides contributions to the Council in the form of the New Homes Bonus that can be spent on wider infrastructure enhancements.
- The new populous resulting from the scheme will help sustain the existing key services in the local centre and beyond.

A social role

- Provides high-quality residential accommodation in accordance with identified needs for small to medium sized housing.
- Increases opportunities for home ownership in a high value area.
- Supports the continued vitality and viability of the key facilities within the settlement.
- Represents a high standard of design, including architectural detailing.

An environmental role

- The site is sustainably located within the settlement boundary on previously developed land.
- Responds positively to the local context, respecting the character and appearance of the wider area and the locally important buildings.
- The new dwellings will be within an improved EPC band.

- Comprises a site that does not form ‘protected land’ having regard to Footnote 4 of the NPPF. The provision of housing in this location reduces the pressure on more sensitive locations or outside settlement boundary sites.

6.2 Local Plan policies considered relevant to this application largely make the aspirations of national policy more local.

6.3 With regard to Policy CS31, it has been noted above that the premises are no longer capable of providing a high quality of care and there is no possibility within the current building for the practice to follow government guidelines about creating bigger and more multifunctional surgeries and, as the letter at Appendix 1 sets out, the surgery is now closed. It is therefore considered well documented that there is no realistic future for a continuing practice at these premises and it is therefore necessary to consider its redevelopment potential.

6.4 The pre-application advice received also referred to the potential for other ground floor “centre uses” in accordance with Policy DM13, although the advice did acknowledge that the site was not within the identified Key Frontage. Nonetheless, such “centre uses” are set out in national and local policy as:

- Retail (A1 uses)
- Financial and professional (A2 uses)
- Cafes and restaurants (A3 uses)
- Drinking establishments (A4 uses)
- Takeaways (A5 uses)
- Hotels (C1 uses)
- Non-residential institutions such as healthcare, schools, nurseries and churches (D1 uses)
- Assembly and leisure (D2 uses)
- Certain uses falling within the ‘sui generis’ category typically found in centres, including launderettes, theatres, tattooists, beauty parlours and amusement arcades

6.5 So, of the ‘centre uses’, it is suggested here that the ‘sui generis’ uses could be discounted as they would appear wholly inappropriate for this building, as could the D2 uses which include bingo halls, dance halls, swimming pools, ice rinks etc.

- 6.6 A drinking establishment called The Priory would have a certain irony, but pubs seem to be closing faster than GP surgeries so perhaps not so sustainable either. Similarly with retail where changing patterns of retail use mean there must be doubt about both the need and economic viability of a retail unit in this position. It is also the case that there has never in the past been any retail use on this site and the building is a Priory Avenue building, not a Church Street building. It is also the case that, as identified by CADRA, conversion to retail use would entail substantial damage to the architectural character of the building. The same would be the case with an A3 use where one would also have to ask if Caversham had sufficient cafes and restaurants already?
- 6.7 Day Care centres are becoming increasingly lucrative and fall within the D1 use class but car parking is very restricted in the area and in our experience some space is required for drop off/pick ups, but also outdoor space for the children, even if it could be argued that parents would all walk to the site.
- 6.8 From the above, it is considered reasonable to say that this property does not lend itself to any of the “centre uses” and that a residential scheme is the most appropriate alternative where there would appear to be a more pressing need for housing in the borough. Having established that, it is necessary to consider the scheme in that light.
- 6.9 With the retention of the existing building and fenestration the character of the building itself and its relationship to neighbouring properties and the area more generally is maintained and where the building is considered to be of a high design quality it is considered the scheme would be acceptable with regard to Policy CS7 and the character and appearance of the area.
- 6.10 The site is within a highly sustainable location but is somewhat constrained and it is considered that the incorporation of all 1 & 2-bed units in the scheme is appropriate in this case. Policy CS15 refers to the provision of an appropriate range of housing opportunities in terms of housing types, sizes and tenures which should be informed by matters such as the areas character and the sites accessibility as well as the need to achieve high design quality and minimize environmental impacts.
- 6.11 Having regard to that policy, it is not considered appropriate to provide 3-bed family units on this site given its central location and its constrained nature in terms of space for vehicle parking and amenity areas but the mix proposed here is considered to give adequate flexibility to the housing stock in the area.

- 6.12 The scheme proposes a car free development and this did not appear to raise concern through the previous pre-application process. However, such developments are becoming more common in the borough, which seems sensible and reasonable given the levels of congestion on the roads and poor air quality associated with motor cars, and the issue of car parking was discussed in the appeal relating to development of The Old Bakehouse in Hemdean Road, Caversham in January 2013 in respect of application reference 11/01913/FUL, where the Inspector concluded that a car free development as proposed in that case was wholly appropriate given the sites highly sustainable location.
- 6.13 There are also other examples locally of car free developments such as at 36B Church Road, Caversham where an Inspector also found this appropriate in respect of applications 07/01614/FUL and 07/01613/FUL. Notwithstanding that, there is provision on the street directly outside the site for 6 – 7 vehicles to park and which are currently designated for doctors and disabled parking only. With the change of use of the building it is presumed that those spaces would revert to regular parking spaces with the extension of the residents parking permit scheme. Certainly, there are considered to be sufficient cycle spaces provided in a secure facility.
- 6.14 There are areas of open amenity space around the building but as a conversion of an existing building, opportunities to provide further amenity space is limited. However, there is municipal provision of open space in close proximity to the site, including along the river, and where the site is within such proximity to the village and town centres, and with easy access by means other than the private motor car, we are of the opinion that the scheme is acceptable with regard to Policy DM10. Indeed, it is the case that any potential future occupiers of the flats will be fully aware of the situation and make choices based on that situation and the sites highly sustainable location.
- 6.15 With regard to Policy DM8, it is not considered that the change of use of the building would significantly affect the amenities currently enjoyed by neighbouring occupiers, particularly where there are no additional window openings proposed. In terms of the amenities of future occupants, all flats have windows to the main rooms providing daylight and outlook and the size of the flats comply with national space standards.
- 6.16 It is acknowledged that the site is within an AQMA and that traffic noise does emanate from Church Street. However, that is not particularly unusual within the Reading urban area and the same can be said of the residential properties along Prospect Street and, possibly to a lesser degree, residential properties along Gosbrook Road, all within the

AQMA and subject to traffic noise. Whilst mitigation measures can be incorporated to reduce such impacts, it is important within this scheme to maintain the integrity of the building as it sits within the area, including retention of existing windows and the external appearance of the building. To that end, such mitigation may be restricted but can be secured through an appropriately worded condition if considered necessary.

- 6.17 Policy DM6 seeks to secure affordable housing contributions for new development in the borough and the application acknowledges that policy and proposes that a reasonable contribution should be secured.
- 6.18 Notwithstanding that, we consider this scheme to represent an appropriate use of the building within a highly sustainable location and where it has been established that the former use as a surgery is not viable.
- 6.19 The existing building is clearly an important building within the area with architectural and historic interest and while not on the statutory list the scheme has been imagined almost as if it were with the retention of the external fabric and internal fittings and fixtures. In order to achieve that aim, and for other reasons set out previously in this statement, “centre uses” are not appropriate where fabric would be lost and the integrity of the building threatened.
- 6.20 This is also important when considering that the building may soon be incorporated into the St Peters Conservation Area where it is considered to form an important and interesting historical group of buildings with the adjoining two semi-detached properties to the north.
- 6.21 We are excited about the re-development potential of this important building and feel that our approach, which has been worked up with CADRA, is an appropriate response to the constraints and opportunities of the site. The NPPF sets out, among other things, at paragraph 17 that planning should “*not simply be about scrutiny, but instead be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives*”, and it is hoped that officers can appreciate the positives in this application and engage in constructive dialogue.

September 2018

APPENDIX A – Letter from Berkshire West CCG announcing closure of Priory Surgery



57 – 59 Bath Road
Reading
Berkshire
RG30 2BA

Tel: 01189 503 094

Wednesday 23rd May, 2018

Head of Planning Development and Regulatory Services
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Dear Giorgio,

Priory Avenue Surgery

You may be aware from our previous discussions that Priory Avenue Surgery will close on 30th June 2018. Following the closure, I understand that the owners of the premises intend to submit a planning application for the conversion of the surgery into residential units. The purpose of this letter is to confirm that the premises will no longer be required for NHS purpose following the closure. Should you have any queries on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

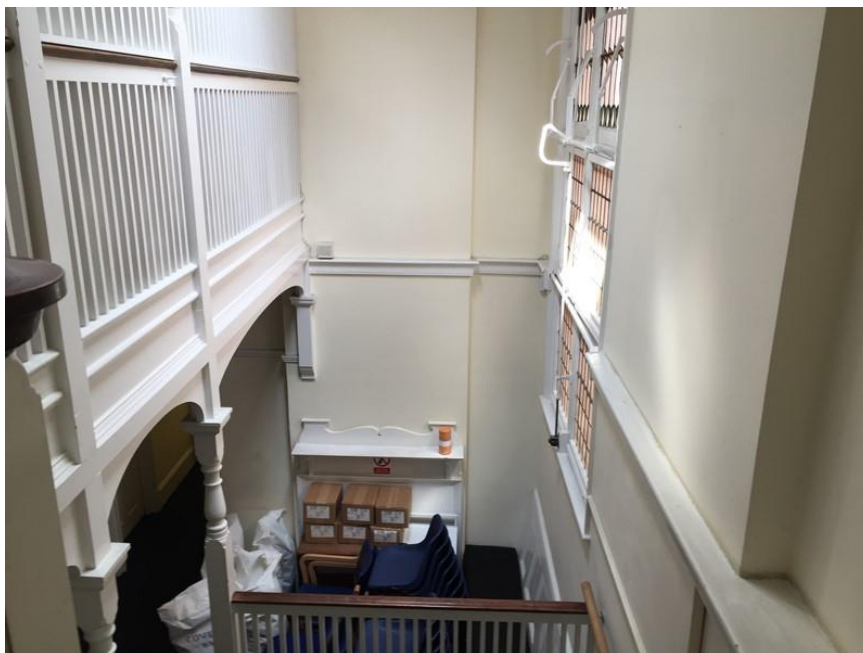
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Clark".

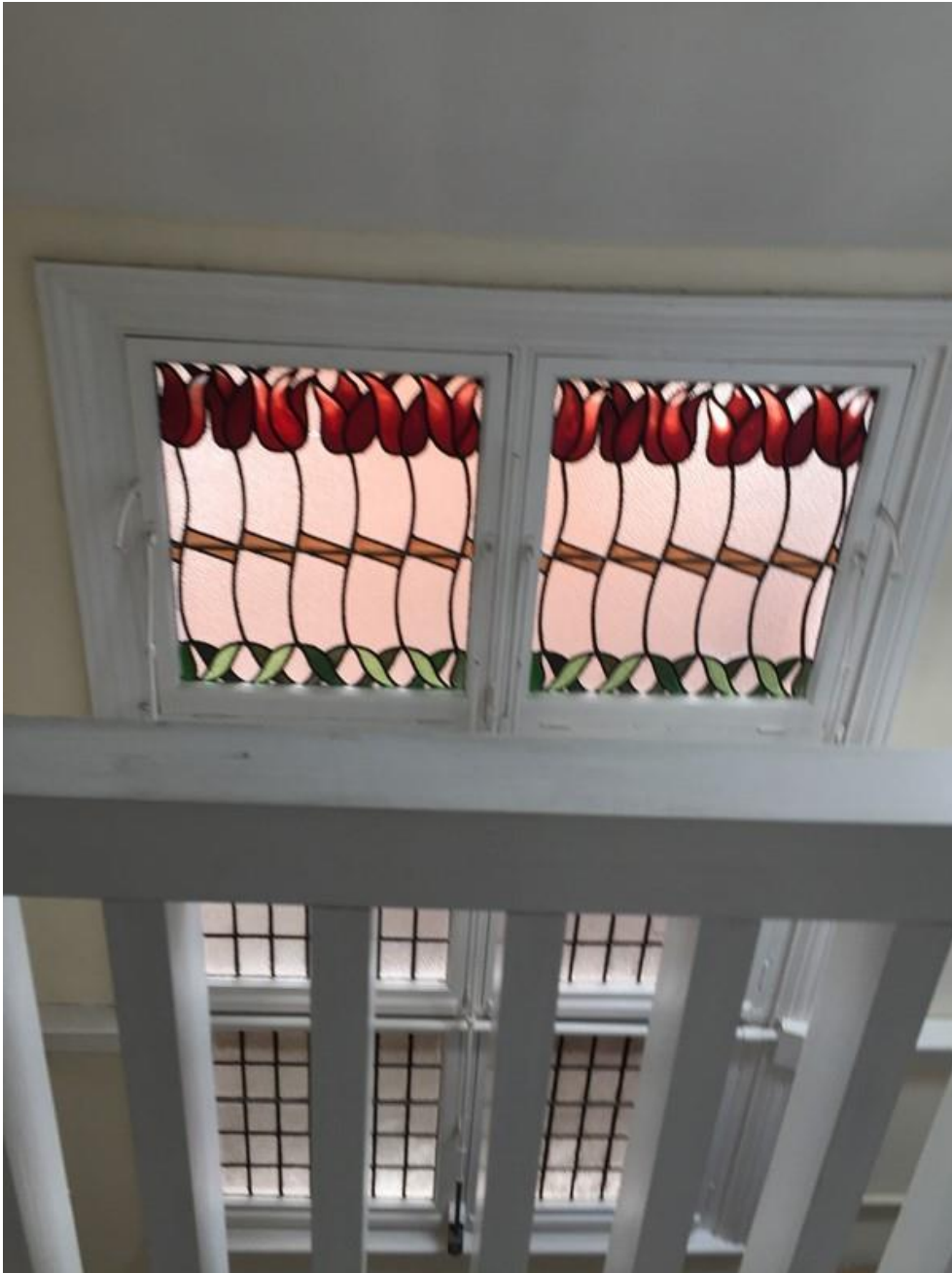
Helen Clark
Director of Primary Care
Berkshire West CCG

www.berkshirewestccg.nhs.uk

APPENDIX B – Internal photographs









APPENDIX C – Correspondence from CADRA

Dear Rod

Thank you for getting in touch with the new iteration of the plans.

We very much welcome the revised approach to the conversion of the building, the retention of the existing entrance and stair hall and its features, and the retention of as much as possible of the rooms to the south of the entrance way/stair, now to be 1 bed flats.

It would be helpful if the plans could be notated to reflect and confirm this approach, likewise the design and access statement could expand and confirm this. We believe that to get the best out of the conversion of the entrance/stairway and the rooms to the south, they should be treated with a similar approach and care as if the building were listed, (although it is not). A detailed schedule of each room/ space could indicate fittings and fitments to be preserved, extent of new openings formed, existing openings blocked etc. This can only be done by a careful detailed examination of each space with larger scale drawings to make the best of existing assets. A confirmation that this is the approach that will be followed would be very helpful.

Likewise externally, confirmation that existing timber windows and the main entrance door are to be retained would also confirm the approach.

I hope that is helpful and we look forward to seeing further detail. As I have holidays in the month ahead, it would be helpful if emails could be copied to my colleagues who are copied above.

kind regards

Helen

Helen Lambert

Caversham and District Residents Association
www.cadra.org.uk
Please 'like' our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/cavershamresidents>

10 July 2018

Dear Patrick

Thank you very much for your time yesterday and the opportunity to see inside the building. We were very pleased to be contacted at this early stage to discuss your plans for a new purpose for the surgery.

Below you will see a detailed response from Kim Pearce with photos and a marked up plan and also a preliminary response from Megan Aldrich, a well respected local architectural historian who has worked with CADRA on a number of projects. You will see that Megan has kindly offered to prepare a fuller architectural report.

We have also referred back to the preparatory research for the Conservation Area and can report that 2 Priory Avenue was built in 1902. We expect to be able to provide further detail given a little time.

We will keep the Conservation Area Advisory Committee up to date and very much look forward to working with you to establish a workable outcome which respects the architectural integrity of this fine building in the heart of Caversham.

kind regards

Helen

Helen Lambert

Caversham and District Residents Association
www.cadra.org.uk
Please 'like' our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/cavershamresidents>

Dear Patrick,

Thanks very much for showing Helen Lambert, Megan Aldrich and I around your building at 2 Priory Avenue yesterday, the visit was much appreciated. I said I'd summarise our discussions and the suggested approach that CADRA would recommend for the building.

To start with the overall context, as you know CADRA and the Reading Conservation Area Committee have recently completed an update of the formal St Peters Conservation Area Appraisal. Reading Borough Council are undertaking a final public Consultation on the new appraisal prior to its proposed adoption by the Council. The new appraisal extends the area of the Conservation Area to include 2 Priory Avenue in view of the strong stylistic Arts and Crafts character of the building and the fact that the former surgery, magnolia tree and the adjoining two polychrome brickwork semis visually form an important and interesting historic group of buildings

With regard to the initially proposed retail use of the southern part of the ground floor of the building, we believe there is a very strong case for not proposing retail use for any part of this building, a) there has never in the past been any retail use on this site, b) the building is a Priory Avenue building (not a Church Street building), c) Changing patterns of retail use mean there must be doubt about both the need and economic viability of a retail unit in this position, d) Conversion to retail use as proposed would entail substantial damage to the architectural character of the building.

Turning now to the conversion of the building to residential use (flats), the current initial designs propose effectively the gutting of the interior of the building to form five flats, this would increase to six assuming the retail unit becomes residential.

Following our visit yesterday it is clear that the Arts and Crafts character of the exterior of the building has been followed through into the interior detailing of some of the major rooms/spaces, in particular the entrance hall, stairway and landing and the rooms to the south of the entrance area. Features here include stained glass, fire surrounds, window embrasure seating, panelled doors, joinery, skirtings and architraves etc, all in an Arts and Crafts style distinctive of the period. We would therefore suggest an alternative approach to a residential conversion which would preserve as much as possible of these features.

We would recommend that the original entrance way, stairway and landing are kept in their entirety and reused as access to four of the flats thus allowing retention of all important features and detailing of these spaces. The three rooms to the south of the entrance way and stair on both ground and first floor would each become one bed flats. If done sensitively and with care many of the surviving features in these rooms such as fire surrounds, window seating, panelled doors, skirtings and architrave joinery, and plaster coving etc can be retained within the new flats. Rooms to the north of the the existing stairway leading towards the new build extension are more utilitarian in character and have less distinctive architectural detailing, more change to internal layout is acceptable if necessary in these areas, two bed flats could be in this area but with their entry doors off the original entrance hall / landing. The remaining two flats in the new build extension would have separate access similar to that proposed in your sketch plans. In this area we would suggest consideration is given to moving the bin store

to the end of the building adjacent the bike store. This would enable more of your existing perimeter to be reclaimed for green space.

I attach below an indicative mark up of the existing plans of the building illustrating the above suggested strategy for conversion, together with a few of the photos taken yesterday.

The approach outlined above will take slightly more space than the gutting of the whole building currently proposed, we would suggest that consideration be given to not demolishing as much of the extension of your building currently proposed to compensate. Not having retail to the south will mean that green amenity area around the building is increased to the south, where some proposed is lost to the north. Retaining existing features as as we have proposed should also provide interesting marketing advantages for four of the flats.

I hope these comments are helpful. I confirm that CADRA would support the strategy outlined in this email for conversion of this interesting building, as opposed to the current approach. We also anticipate that the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee will also support this more careful approach. There may be advantages to your project in involving both an architect and a building contractor who have experience of working sensitively with historic buildings.

CADRA would be happy to comment on any new plans.

Thanks again for arranging the visit to the building .

Kind regards,

Kim Pearce

END