

06/06/2017



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Seafield Court

Russell St,

Reading

RG1 7XD

Proposed Conversion of Basement
into Residential Units

Rev.	Description	Date
A	First issue	06/06/17



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2. SITE DETAILS AND LOCATION

Site address: Seafield Court, Russell Street, Reading, RG1 7XD

Project: Conversion of existing basement into 2No. residential flats

The application site is accessed via Russell St, a short walk from Broad Street, the main shopping precinct of Reading city. Local amenities on Russell Street and within surrounding roads include a pub, convenience store, pharmacy, food takeaways, and estate agents amongst others.

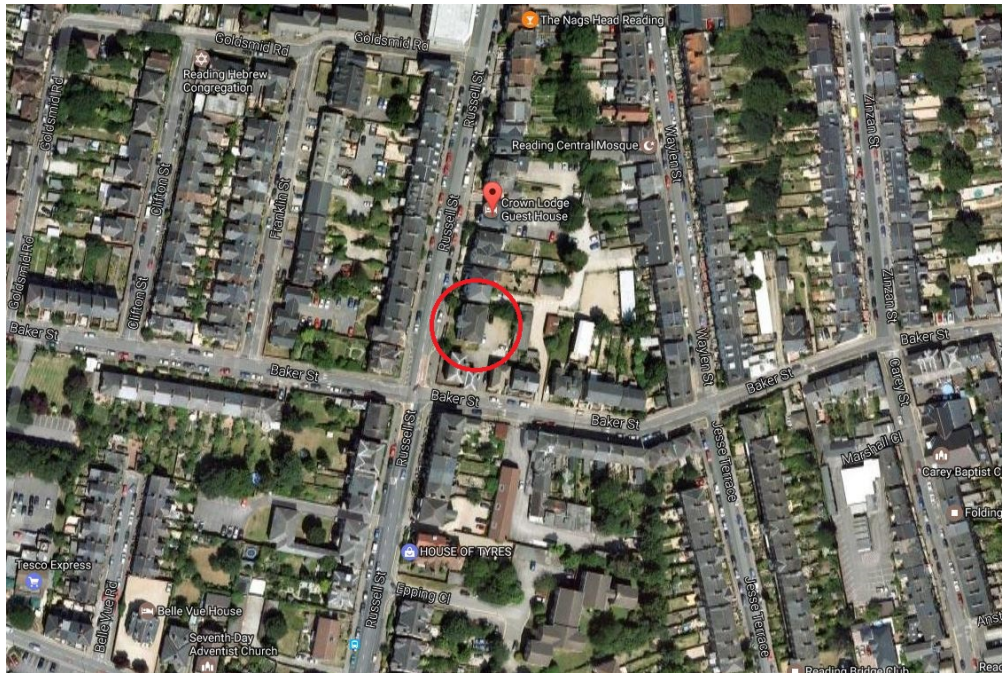


Fig. 1 – Local satellite view of immediate area

The site is well served with public transport particularly as Reading and Reading West train station are within walking distance to the site.

The town centre is well served by public transport and major transport links to connect with surrounding towns and cities. Reading West and Reading train station also has frequent trains to neighbouring cities and a relative short distance commute time to London (approx 30 mins to Paddington, London). Reading also has direct transport links via the M4 to Heathrow International Airport.

The property sits within a Conservation area. See Heritage statement in section 6 for more details

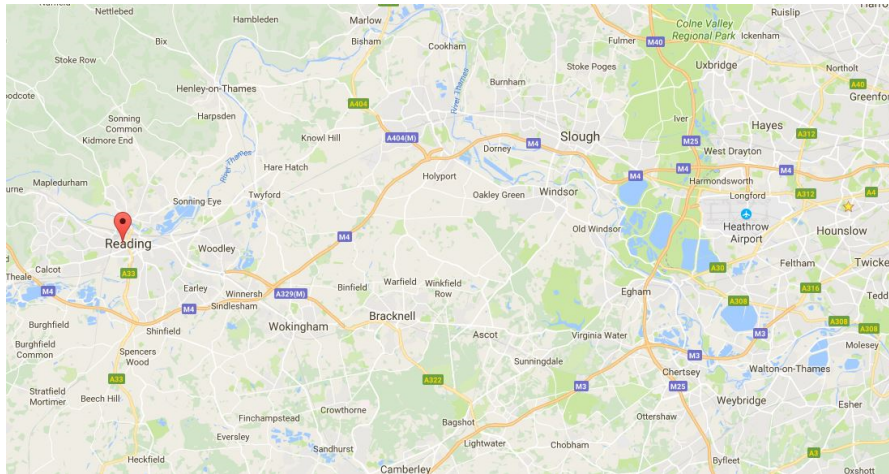


Fig. 2 – Reading in relation to London and Heathrow Airport

3. EXISTING PROPERTY

The current property comprises of private residential units on the ground, first and second floors.

The existing area of the site is 647m².

The existing property is made of red brick with white render. The existing windows are a mix of white painted timber sash windows and uPVC casement windows. The roof is covered by concrete interlocking roof tiles.

Below is a photo of the front elevation of the property.



Fig. 3 – Photo from Russell Street



Fig. 4 – Photo from rear of property



Fig. 5 – Photo inside basement



Fig. 6 – Recent photo showing the entrance area used for fly tipping

Of late, the safety and security of the current occupiers has come under threat as the basement has been broken in to by drug users. There have been various occasions where waste has been fly-tipped and left blocking the entrance to the basement. The proposed development seeks to make better use of this basement area which is becoming a hazard in it's current state.

4. PREVIOUS PLANNING APPLICATIONS

2nd March 2015 Application Ref 150359 - Re-building of structurally unsafe front boundary wall including a new front gate, replacement of front door to flats, and re-surfacing of rear parking area.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

The following section highlights key relevant planning policies and local guidelines that have informed the design process.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) Guidance Notes

Residential Conversion – Supplementary Planning Document November 2013

Section 2.21 – Minimum Internal Floorspace Standards and Headroom – House conversions can be more successful when they alter the existing property as little as possible.

Section 2.22 – Internal Floorspace Standards – The proposal meets the minimum internal floorspace standards relating to housing conversions and HMO's.

Section 2.28 – Basements – 'There are no adopted standards relating specifically to basements, but a planning judgement will be made as to the suitability of the accommodation proposed.

Section 2.38 – Cycle Storage - The provision of cycle parking must be considered essential for most developments. The quality of any cycle parking should reflect the likely usage with more secure systems being used for longer term storage such as within residential developments. Standards for cycle parking should be applied as minimum standards and reflect the potential for cycling. 4-6nos. bike racks will be provided to as part of the conversion of the basement to residential units.

Section 2.40 – Bin Storage - The use and layout of external space to the front and rear of the property should be carefully considered. For instance, the visual impact of converted dwellings can be lessened by screening refuse storage areas and providing external spaces that are easy to maintain (i.e. with hard standing and hardy plant species). Bin storage should have a level access to the public highway in order to facilitate collection. Bin storage should be located with a maximum carry distance of 9 metres for refuse collectors. Details of the refuse disposal arrangements must be included as part of any planning application for a conversion. As part of the development to convert the basement to residential units, additional bins will be located at the front of the building.

6. OBJECTIVES

Design

1. The design arises from consideration and assessment of the original properties within the street. Most properties in Russell Street have habitable spaces at basement level.
2. Assessment of the buildings within the locality leads to the conclusion that the design adopted is appropriate.

3. The proposed development is contained within the current building fabric with the only new additions being the windows and lightwells to the front elevation which are discrete and in-keeping with the surrounding properties.

Amount

1. The proposal consists of the alteration of the internal layout of the existing basement storage area.
2. The scheme complies with all of the Local Authority Planning Policy and Planning Guidance.
3. The proposal contains 2 new units, 1x one-bed and 1x two-bed unit of spacious accommodation

One-bed (GIA)	47.6m2 (512 sq.ft)
Two-bed (GIA)	54.8m2 (590 sq.ft)
Total Area (GIA)	102.4m2 (1102 sq.ft)

Use

1. The proposed use is for residential purposes.
2. The proposed use is in character with the area and is discordant with similar development in the immediate local area.

Layout

1. The site is located within the established residential road known as Russell Street.
2. The orientation and siting of the proposed works is such as to relate to the adjoining buildings without giving rise to overlooking or loss of amenity for those occupiers.
3. The proposal consists of the refurbishment and conversion of the existing basement into residential units.

Access

1. Access into the new flats will be via the rear of the building with a level entrance.
2. Access to the existing flats will be maintained from the front of the building.

There will be steps parallel to the side of the property for occupiers to get to the front of the property easily to take out bins etc.

7. HERITAGE STATEMENT

History and heritage significance

A conservation area is defined as an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

The proposed conversion of the basement level is discreet and is not visible from the street. Seafeld Court is not a listed building nor deemed of historic interest.

Impact of the proposal

Careful consideration has been given to any impact on the Conservation Area and we are of the opinion that there is no measurable impact. No perceivable changes are proposed to the front elevation of the property, with the inclusion of two below ground lightwells and railings being hidden behind the front boundary wall and therefore no changes will be visible from the street. There is no measurable impact upon the street scene nor is there any measurable impact to the built environment.

The proposed conversion of the basement to accommodation units will have a minimal effect on the view from the public park/conservation area due to the matching materials, style, and form of the design. The proposed railing around the new front lightwell will be finished in black paint in-keeping with those in surrounding properties.

8. CONCLUSION

It is of our opinion that the proposed development has no detrimental effect on the surrounding area and is in-fitting in both scale, form and proposed materials. It will provide two quality and energy efficient homes, and has been carefully designed to comply with local and national planning policies. It is well served by local amenities and promotes sustainable travel via cycling and the use of public transport. The impact on the local highways and sewer network are negligible.

The surrounding area of Reading has been identified as an area of high demand for housing, and smaller housing in particular. The proposal fulfills these needs in an existing urban area, and within a known local employment area, and we therefore feel there should be no reason for refusal on this occasion.

The proposed development will stop anti-social behavior in the basement and improve the safety of the property occupiers in what has become a hazardous, un-used storage area that is underutilized space in the current housing crisis.