



Design and Access Statement

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38 Queens Road, Reading, RG1 4AU

Aspire 38 Ltd

Conversion of four storey office unit in Grade II listed building into 5 self-contained flats

September 2017

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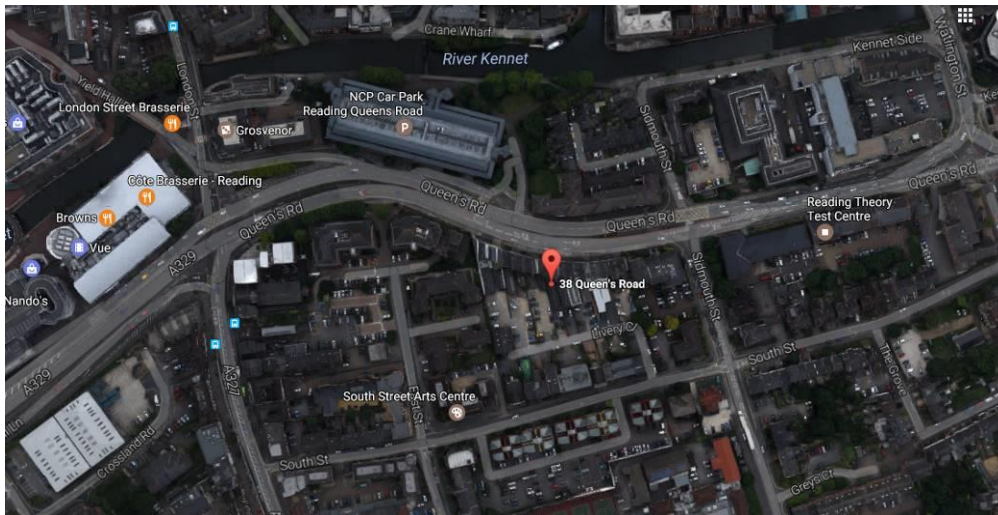
Planning Application September 2017

Introduction

An accompanying document for a full plans submission to Reading Borough Council for Change of Use and Listed Building Consent for the conversion of existing four storey (including the basement) office accommodation into five self-contained flats.

Location and Site

The property is within a terrace which is located within the Queen's Crescent on the Queens Road, close to Reading Town Centre. It fronts onto the Queen's Road with front access to the main building. The rear is accessible via Livery Close, which can be accessed by both pedestrians and vehicles. The rear accessed area serves the terrace and other properties on South Street. Queens Road is a mixed use area with mainly residential and office/ professional uses. The area is well served by local transport facilities and the mainline train station.



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Design

Heritage Statement

The property is a terraced unit within the Grade II listed Queen's Crescent. The block was listed in 1957 and was built in 1832-33 in Bath stone with three storeys and a basement. It is believed that the terrace was originally used for residential purposes and this proposal seeks to revert it to its original use suitable for modern day living requirements. The listed record notes:

A very slight crescent with houses on a skew, following the curve of the road. 3 storeys Bath stone ashlar. Channelled ground floor. Band over ground floor. Plain cornice and parapet. 3 ranges of glazing bar sashes each, 1st floor centre of each with pediment. Ground floor windows round

headed, one each, No 44 1+3 (formerly 2 houses). Bracketed hoods to 4 panel doors with rectangular overlights and architrave surrounds. Butterfly roofs with brick chimneys.¹

Some of the units have had lightwells added to serve the basement although this is not the case with number 38.

There are no notable features internally of any note within the listed register and the building has been modified over the years such that few original features have been retained as demonstrated in the photos below. The exception to this being the staircase from ground to second floor which the proposal seeks to retain. All other original features including cornices, fireplaces, skirtings and doors have been removed by previous occupants in so far as visible in the current configuration of the unit. Currently some levels have suspended ceilings and it is not known if there are any features above this that warrant preservation; if on removal these reveal features, subject to condition we will seek to retain these.



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Photos: Top left, clockwise – staircase through building, existing glazing with secondary glazing and chimney breast with no fireplace or features; note skirtings and floor covering not original or of any note, another image of the fireplace in full view to show no historic features, ground floor main window to front with intermediate partitions and suspended ceiling visible.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1113563>

To the rear many of the terraces have been modified over the years and number 38 is no exception with a large single storey extension with a pitched roof which was built in the early 1980's. There is also vehicular access and parking spaces to the rear as shown on the photo below.



Photos: Image of unit from rear, with parking visible and bike rack in distance.

Existing and proposed use

Current uses within the terrace comprise of commercial office use, residential flats and houses of multiple occupation.

The proposal seeks to convert the office space into 6 x 1 bedroom self-contained flats, use class C3.

Number 38's last known use was as a drug rehabilitation unit in late September 2016. The original application for the change of use from B1 to D1 in January 2009 noted this as only for the duration of that particular lease; at the end of which it would revert back to B1. A copy of this consent is attached within Appendix A.

The previous use for the drug rehabilitation clinic is no longer required since the Council has consolidated the use of these services at its new 4 Waylan Street Drug and Alcohol Service facilities within a council owned unit. Under policy CS31 health facilities are considered a community facility, with the policy detailing that it must be demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain the facility before its loss is accepted. In this case, this medical use was only permitted for the duration

of the original lease and the needs have been met in a local purpose developed facility therefore meaning that it is considered, in this specific case, there to be no inherent need to retain the facility, and as such the use class has been reverted back to B1 based on the original application and this is demonstrated within the attached supporting documents.

When the existing tenant was due to vacate, agents were engaged to market the unit for let as an office. The property was marketed for let as B1 use from March 2016. Despite concerted efforts from a number of agents the previous owners have failed to manage to get long term tenants for the property as B1 office use, in spite of it being marketed as an office for 9 months.

It is considered and has been the view of the primary marketing agents, that the listed building status and subsequent restrictions make the unit prohibitive for office use over 4 levels and therefore making it commercially unviable to let as marketed, as B1 offices, this is supported by a letter from the agents within Appendix B. On this basis there would be no loss of employment within the site in converting to residential C3 use. This is in coherence with both National (NPPF paragraph 51) and Local planning policy (CS 11) which notes that conversions of offices to residential should be permitted where there is an identified need for additional housing and no longer a requirement for office space.

There have been a number of planning/listed permissions for change of use to residential uses in recent years within the terrace, in addition to the application site, such as No's 24-26 (Refs 06/01172 & 06/01173), No. 28 (Ref 070849), No. 34 (Refs 131103 & 131105), No. 48 (Refs 120939 & 121644) and No. 52 (Refs 110380 & 110381) and as such there is a marked shift towards support for residential use within the area and support for this.

The principle of providing a residential use is also considered acceptable. This aligns with the broad objectives of policy CS 14, in assisting in meeting the annual housing targets.

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Proposal and alterations:

It is intended that the original fabric of the building will remain largely untouched in accordance with policy CS 33. The existing internal stud partitions that have been added over time will be removed and new instated to suit optimised layouts to provide suitable residential accommodation.

To the front, no major modifications are intended and the external façade will be retained as existing. We are seeking to introduce a new lightwell to serve the basement level accommodation at the front and this will be on par with others within the terrace. So as to minimise the impact on the elevation, it is intended that this will have a horizontal safety grill level with the patio paving to the front which mitigates the need for any vertical railings that would interrupt the rhythm of the façade. It is envisaged to introduce a new lightwell to the rear which be similar in appearance to that at the front.

Modifications to the rear will be limited to the addition of a new entrance door to the lobby to the rear extended wing, one of the windows being repositioned to align with proposed layout and a new window to the bathroom which fronts onto an alley between units that will be obscured glass. As well as flues for new boilers on all levels.

Internally, the existing staircase from ground to second floor will be retained; albeit decorations will be upgraded. From first to second the staircase will be enclosed such that the entrance for the top

floor flat can be accommodated at first floor, although the balustrade does not appear to be an original feature this will be retained within the stud work.

The stairwell down to the basement appears to have been modified over the years and we will be making modifications such that the winders are removed at the head to provide a more coherent access to the basement level flat factoring in the new level that will be created at entry level to accommodate additional head room at basement level.

At basement level, an existing structural opening is to be increased to improve outlook within the space, this wall has no notable features and does not appear to support the fabric above.

At ground floor, as noted, all office partitions to be removed and three flats to be accommodated, of which two will be in the extended wing. Suspended ceilings will be removed throughout, and within this extended wing the intent is for the space to be vaulted such that it maximises the height with a number of functional conservation area style roof lights to be added to floor the space with natural day light.

Going up to first, the sub landing WC will be removed and a utility storage space to be accommodated within this. A similar principle is adopted at second floor albeit with the access for the flat created on the first floor.

We have also proposed to introduce some conservation area roof lights at second floor such that the rooms will have vaulted ceilings. Having looked at aerial views of the terrace it is evident that other units within the block have had rooflights added historically.

In order to meet compliance with building regulations we intend to upgrade both fire protection and sound proofing throughout between units through the use of fire boarding and sound insulation. Original walls and floors will be retained within the fabric of this new build up. Thermal upgrades will be subject to requirements under Part L of the building regulations, where required PIR insulated plasterboard systems will be used internally on external walls on a baton system. As this system will be independent, the main fabric of the original walls will remain unaffected.

Noise Impact on Development

To meet compliance with internal noise levels as stated within BS 8233:2014, which states the criteria for noise within bedrooms should be <30dB for Bedrooms and <35dB for Living Rooms the design has allowed for bedrooms to the rear of the units, which will inevitably be quieter. In addition, the current secondary glazing that exists to the windows facing the front will be retained – these significantly reduce traffic noise by 45dB in order to meet the noise level criteria for the Living Areas which will front onto Queens Road.

This is on par with an acoustic survey which was undertaken for 28 Queens Road in 2007 in association with a Planning Application for residential conversion; Planning Reference: 07/01369/FUL. The council is in a position to refer to this report which identifies noise levels of 69.9 - 69.2dB within the building (where secondary glazing is not present), resulting from the traffic along Queens Road².

² Report Reference: Analytical & Environmental Services, Report 14422, August 2007

Since number 28 is within the same terrace, and built at the same time, the material fabric and façade arrangement of 28 and 38 Queens Road are virtually the same, including the construction, size, and positioning of the sash windows and therefore it is believed that the findings of that report are applicable to 38 Queens Road.

To allow for complete flexibility for occupants, an acoustically dampened ventilation system is proposed for the living areas fronting onto Queens Road to enable the windows to remain closed if so desired. This secondary ventilation system will be ducted to a terminal passing through the roof on the rear slope.

External works to the rear

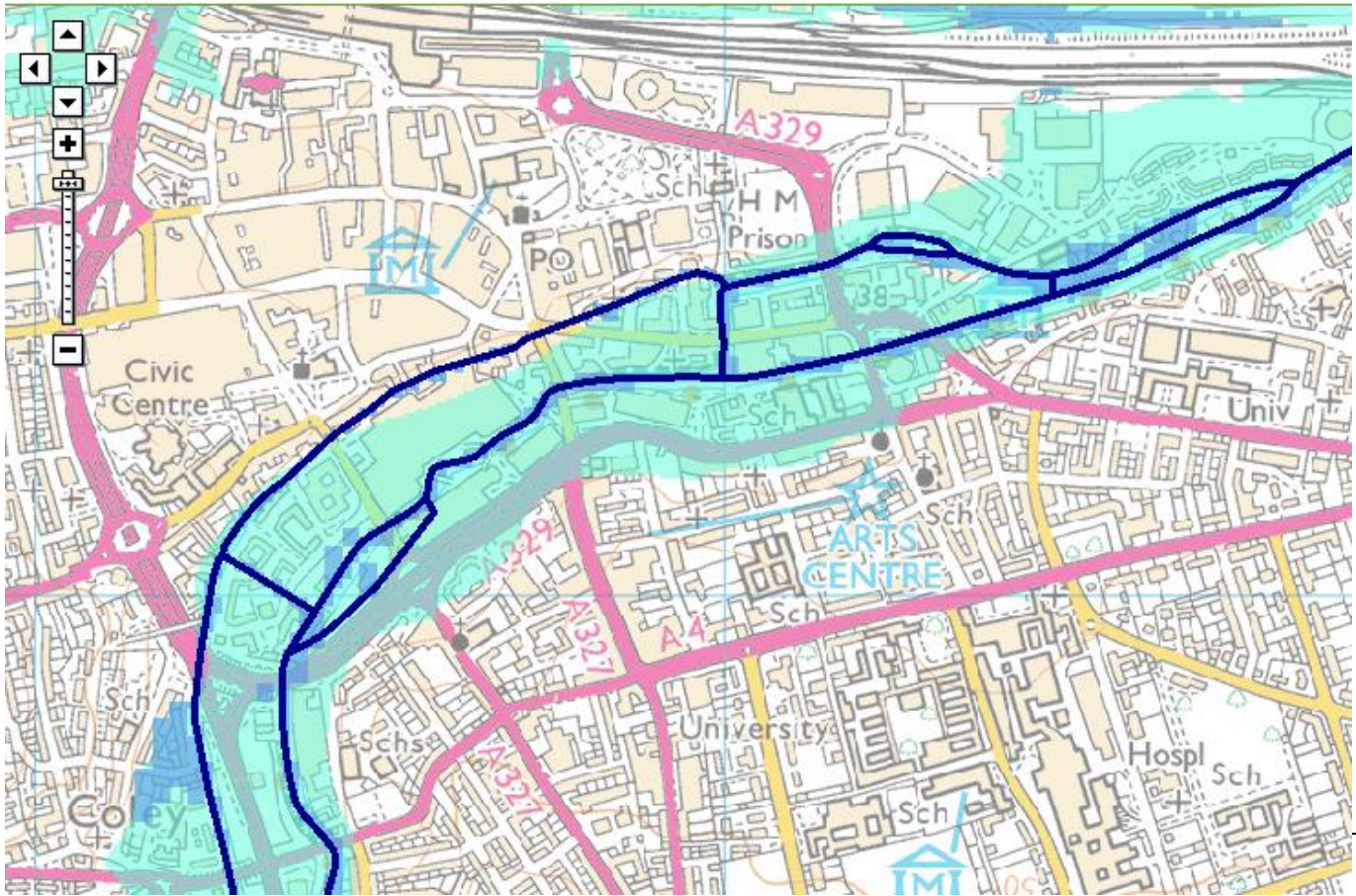
The property already benefits from a designated bin store and covered cycle store with capacity for 6 bikes. These will be retained. In addition the court has capacity for up to 4 cars; albeit this is to be modified so as to allow free access to all occupants.

The property falls within Zone 2 for residential parking standards and therefore in accordance with table for residential parking provision within Revised Parking-Standards and Design SPD adopted October 2011 for a 1-2 bedroom flat 1 space per unit is required. This requires 6 spaces to be provided in total for the 6 flats.

Since the property is well served by local transport it is not deemed necessary for every unit to have a car parking space. The modified parking space layout will accommodate 4 cars. Since these are one bed units, likely to be occupied by young professionals there is not anticipated to be a heavy reliance or need for car use given the central location. On this basis flats that have not been designated a car parking space will be sold with an annual membership for a local car club that operates in the area which allows for access to a vehicle on an as and when required basis which is a sustainable solution. Based on this, and on site parking spaces it is anticipated that with the units being 1 bed units, the occupants will not increase demand on the local residential permit area and therefore there will be no increase to parking demand in the area.

The gravel base to the rear will be retained with the stone pavers leading to the rear entrance also retained.

Flood Risk



The terrace runs west to east parallel with the Kennet and Avon Canal and the free flowing River Kennet channel some 100m to the north of the site (see Environment Agency Floodrisk Map above).

The front part of the building is located within the Environment Agencies Flood Zone 2 (medium risk, 1% - 0.1% annual probability of river flooding) medium risk. The rear lies outside the flood zone.

Road and footpath at the front are higher than the 1 in a 100 year predicted flood levels and direct access to the rear of the property is available to all tenancies in the event of flooding to the front entrance.

So far as we are aware, the Environment Agency have no records of any historic flood event affecting the site. Environment Agency records indicate that the water table is approximately 4m below ground level.

Groundwater flooding in and around the site has also not been recorded. But as a precautionary measure, the proposal will instate a cavity drain waterproofing system with sumps and pumps as well as a flood guard valve on foul drains

Notwithstanding the addition of a new lightwell to the front and rear, the building footprint remains unaltered and thus there is no impact to the floodplain storage or flow routes as a result of the development.

The proposed frontage lightwell will have a 100mm upstand around the perimeter to prevent ingress of rainwater. Accordingly the actual level at which floodwater might enter the basement is 47.8m AOD, which is above the 1 in 100 predicted flood levels.

A historic application within the terrace for residential conversion, at the west end of the terrace at number 28 Queens Road (completely within the flood zone) has had a complete flood risk assessment undertaken which was dated December 2006 which notes the Environmental Agency agreed a 1% annual probability flood level at the site of 37.5m AOD. This application and report has been referenced in a number of subsequent applications within the terrace, in light of the ground levels being similar throughout the terrace, and this application seeks to refer to the body of that report which the Council can refer to, should they need to.

The ground level at the front of the building is 49.46m AOD and is therefore comfortably above the 1% annual probability flood level. Land levels continue to rise to the east of the site and then up Sidmouth Street. As such, continuous dry access is achievable from the basement, both front and rear, up to and above the 1% annual probability flood event.

The proposal will not have any effect on 3rd parties flooding interests.

Contributions

The building was in continuous use for at least six months in the past 3 years and therefore conversion to residential use should not be liable to CIL.

Appendix A

Original planning approval for change of use



**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
PLANNING AND COMPENSATION ACT 1991
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURE)
ORDER 1995**

**NOTICE IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATION 3 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY
PLANNING GENERAL REGULATIONS 1992**

To: Reading Borough Council
C/O Mr Dinesh Gohil
19 Bennet Road
Reading
RG2 0QX

Application No: 09/00091/REG3

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

In accordance with Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the above mentioned Regulations READING BOROUGH COUNCIL as local planning authority hereby GRANT planning permission for the following development in accordance with the plans and supporting information submitted in connection with this application.

Proposal: Change of use of building from office (B1 use class) to drugs/addiction clinic (D1 use class)

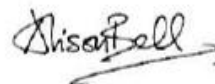
At: 38 Queens Road Reading Berkshire RG1 4AU

Subject to such conditions and for such reasons as may be attached

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**OTHER STATUTORY CONSENTS MAY BE REQUIRED
PLEASE READ THE NOTES ISSUED WITH THIS DECISION NOTICE**

Date: 15th April 2009



Head of Planning & Building Control 

Appendix B

Letting agent's letter



Tina Patel
Formed Architects
80-82 Chiswick High Road
London
W4 1SY

31st January 2017

Dear Tina,

RE: READING - 38 QUEENS ROAD

Further to our recent conversation in respect of the above, I can confirm that Parkinson Holt were jointly instructed with Severage Greaves in March of 2016 to market 38 Queens Road, Reading.

We marketed the property extensively from March 2016 until December 2016. A marketing board was placed on the property, details were circulated via the normal industry channels and the property was featured openly on our website and other recognized commercial property sites.

Throughout this period we did not receive any credible enquiries which we were capable of leading to permanent occupation of the offices. Where initial interest was forthcoming, prospective tenants found the cost of refurbishment relative to the listed status and current tired state to be economically unviable. The initial enquiries failed to materialize into a tenant willing to take on a lease at current market rates and occupy the offices.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Darren Parkinson

Partners Darren Parkinson Derek Gilbert Shaun Waters BSc (Est Mgmt) MRICS

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