

Anthony and Susan Sandall

Proposed Remodelling of Existing Part-Ground floor and Basement
into a two bedroomed Residential Apartment.

Brightwell House, 40 Queens Road, Reading
Berkshire, RG1 4AU

Design Statement



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Summary

This Design Statement supports the Change of Use application and the application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed re-modelling of the ground and basement floors of Brightwell House (other than the rear extension in respect of which planning permission has recently been granted). In view of the July 2016 modification of Policy DM6 there is to be no requirement for Affordable Housing contribution or S106 Agreement

This application follows the Permissions and Consents granted for the conversion of the Upper Floors to provide 2no 1 bedroomed self-contained flats, and the conversion of the rear extension to form a 2 bedroomed flat.

This application is being submitted with the inclusion of the proposals for the courtyard and bin store/cycle sheds so that (i) consent may be granted in accordance with the amended Policy DM6 i.e. without the need for an affordable housing contribution or S106 Agreement and (ii) it is self-contained in the sense that it is not dependent on another consent.

At present the ground floor and basement parts of 40 Queens Road are in use as a Clinic with consulting rooms in the rear extension. The upper floors are in use as offices until the implementation of the recent Permissions.

The application proposal is to remodel the ground floor and basement to provide a two bedroom residential apartment with the bedrooms being on ground floor level and the kitchen and living room being in the basement. Two refinements noted on the drawings are (i) the provision of two sun tubes from the roof to the extended part of the ground floor to bring in natural light into the kitchen area and (ii) a reduction in the parapet height over the light well serving the lounge.

The new unit will have the benefit of a small internal courtyard accessed directly off the Ground Floor bedroom.

Heritage Statement

The building is situated in the Grade II Listed Queen's Crescent; listed 22nd March 1957, English Heritage ID: 39132. The Listing describes the terrace as having been constructed as a slight crescent in 1832-33 by J J Cooper architect. It is of three storeys plus basement built of Bath stone ashlar with channelled ground floor with band over, and plain cornice and parapet. Traditional box sash windows including some pedimented stone surrounds and with bracketed hoods over the entrances, which comprise four panel doors with regular over lights and architrave surrounds.

The Listing does not describe any internal features as being of particular note.

The building has a single storey extension to the rear constructed 4th Quarter of the 20th C. Internally the building has previously been adapted and retains a limited number of original features. Fireplace have been encased or removed. The skirtings, architraves and plaster cornices (where they exist) are simple extruded profiles.

Planning History

- 900020 – Erection of studwork partitioning to form three offices in recently constructed rear extension to main building. LBC granted 5th February 1991
- 040057 – Revised description: Internal refurbishment of listed building and the installation of air conditioning units and front railings. LBC granted 6th January 2005
- 040180 – Change of use to provided medical/consulting rooms. LBC granted 31st May 2004
- 040953 – Temporary Permission for change of use to medical/consulting rooms. Planning Permission granted 26th July 2004.
- 050451 – Change of use to dual use as offices and/or medical consulting rooms. Planning Permission granted 21st November 2005
- 050452 – Change of use to dual use as offices and/or medical consulting rooms. LBC granted 21st November 2005
- 051183 – 3 external air condensers for air conditioning (varying those permitted by 04/01333 LBC) LBC granted 7th December 2005
- 090160 – Listed Building Consent for brass nameplate to front elevation. LBC granted 21st September 2009
- 151183- Change of use of first and second floors from Office (Class A2) to 2 X 1 bed residential units (Class C3) and associated works. Planning Consent granted on 21st November 2015
- 151184 - Internal alterations associated with change of use of first and second floors from office (Class B1a) to 2x1-bed residential units (Class C3) and associated works. LBC granted 21st November 2015
- 160292 Discharge of Conditions on Permission 151183. 16th April 2016
- 160290 - Change of use at rear ground floor level from clinic to one residential unit and the (b) erection of single storey building to rear for associated cycle/waste storage and associated works. Planning Permission granted.
- 160291 - Change of use at rear ground floor level from clinic to one residential unit and the (b) erection of single storey building to rear for associated cycle/waste storage and associated works. LBC granted.

Current Use

The building is currently in use as a Clinic in the rear extension with office reception and meeting rooms on the 1st and 2nd floors and also ground floor and basement.

Proposed Use

The proposal is to remodel the ground floor/ basement to provide a duplex two bedroom residential apartment on these floors whilst retaining the Clinic in the rear extension.

Alterations works proposed

The proposals require minimal modifications to the existing building. No alterations are proposed to the exterior of the building by this Application except for (i) the proposed sun tube which will have minimal impact on the rear of the building and no impact on the front and (ii) the lowering of the parapet to the lightwell and addition of low railings matching front railings. The arrangement of the primary rooms remains unaltered, and no works are proposed to the stairs or to the upper floors. As the current means of access to the basement is a staircase below the existing staircase retaining it would separate out the ground floor part of the premises from the basement part. The proposal is therefore to remove that basement staircase entirely (which will enhance the size of the kitchen), and to replace it with a new staircase internal to the proposed dwelling unit.

The new apartment will be accessed off Queens Road through the existing main entrance off Queens Road.

Where new partition walls are planned to abut existing walls new similar skirtings will be run for the rooms. The proposals do not affect existing fireplaces and surrounds as these have previously been removed or encased other than the fireplace in the front ground floor room which will be retained but possibly re-located to the basement living room. Existing doors and surrounds will be retained, and relocated where necessary, with opening formed to match.

Fire protection and sound attenuation will be upgraded between the apartment and the 1st floor apartment, by laying mineral wool between the floor joists under the planning consent for the 1st and 2nd Floor apartments.

The existing floor boards will be checked for rot of woodworm infestation when the works to remove the existing staircase and construct a new internal one are carried out.

Transport

The building is situated within close proximity to the town centre and has excellent access to good public transport links and town centre amenities. It is intended to provide 2 x car parking spaces for this apartment; the balance of existing four spaces accessed off Livery Close will remain solely for the use of the Clinic. The apartment will be provided with shared use of the secure cycle shed and the adjacent communal refuse area which provides sufficient space for separating recyclables from household waste.

In addition to the availability of ample public open spaces in the vicinity, the apartment will have its own outside space immediately to the rear of the proposed rear ground floor bedroom.

Change of Use

The Reading Borough Local Framework Core Strategy outlines a requirement for new housing and the potential for redeveloping space currently used for employment to provide additional residences.

Reference policy CS11, the ground floor and basement (excluding the rear extension) will no longer be required on the retirement of the Applicant and the relocation of the Clinic use to the rear extension, and so the proposed Change of Use would not result in any loss of employment. The proposal aligns with Paragraph 51 of the National Planning Policy Framework which encourages the reversion of office space back to residential use where there is an identified need for additional housing and no longer a need for the office use.

The proposed residential development supports the aims of policy CS14 in providing much needed housing. The proposal is to provide high quality accommodation designed with a good standard of useable floor space.

Reference Policy DM6 no affordable housing contribution is required following the alteration of that policy on 13th July 2016.

Reference policy DM10, whilst the proposal provides limited external amenity space for the apartment, the location within Central Reading offers ample public amenity space close by.

In line with policy CS2 separate bins for waste and recycling will be positioned in the bin store at the rear of the property with the wheelie bins being moved adjacent to Livery Close on collection days.

Flood Risk

The Building is located within the Environment Agency's Flood Zone 2 - medium risk. The existing ground floor level is considerably higher than the predicted flood levels. Both the road and footpath fronting the site are significantly higher than the 1 in 100 predicted flood levels, and direct access to the rear of the Property is available to occupants allowing for safe egress in case of any flood event. Sleeping areas are at ground floor level. The existing building footprint is unaltered and so does not affect the floodplain storage or flow routes in any way.

A Flood Risk Assessment was carried out and a report compiled by Peter Brett Associates for 28 Queens Road dated December 2006 in association with a planning application for residential conversion; Planning Ref 07/01369FUL. This confirmed and advised of the predicted flood levels and ground floor level of that property. The floor levels are identical for the entire Queen's Crescent and this application refers to the findings of that report which is in the possession of the Borough Council.

Noise Impact on Development

External noise sources have been accounted for within the design of the Apartment. Acceptable internal noise levels are stated in BS 8233:2014 with the criteria for noise set at $\leq 30\text{dB}$ for bedrooms and $\leq 35\text{dB}$ for living rooms.

An acoustic survey was undertaken for 28 Queens Road in 2007 in association with a Planning Application for residential conversion: Planning Ref 07/01369/FUL. This report is in the possession of the Borough Council and identifies noise levels of 69.9 – 69.2dB within the Building emanating from the traffic along Queens Road (Report Reference: Analytical & Environmental Services Report 14422, August 2007).

The fabric and façade arrangement of 28 and 40 Queens Road are identical, including the construction size and positioning of the sash windows. The findings of that report are applicable to 40 Queens Road.

Replacement of sash windows is not proposed but, as a less invasive alternative, secondary glazing will be fitted to internal window reveals to improve acoustic and thermal performance. The secondary glazing will be specified to reduce traffic noise by 45dB in order to meet the noise criteria for the living and bedroom area which will front onto Queens Road.

An alternative means of ventilation is being proposed for the living and bedroom areas which will front onto Queens Road to enable the windows to remain closed if so desired. An acoustically dampened ventilation system will be ducted to a terminal passing through the roof.

Noise between Residential Properties

In order to minimise the disturbance by noise from the occupiers of the apartment, the proposed development will be constructed to achieve the insulation requirements required by Building Control having regard to Approved Document E of the Building Regulations.