

2-4 Church Road, Caversham,
Reading, RG4 7AE

PROPOSED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT WITH GROUND
FLOOR COMMERCIAL AND 3 FLATS ABOVE
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

revA 16.04.24 (revisions in red)



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1.00 INTRODUCTION

- 1.01 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of a Full Planning Application for works to this existing previous bank building in Caversham, to convert it into a mixed use development containing ground floor commercial units (class E (a) – (f) only, excluding class (g).) and 3 flats above (class C3).
- 1.02 The bank building is situated on a triangular site on the south western side of the junction of Church Road, Church Street and Bridge Street to the west of Caversham Centre. The site consists entirely of the bank building and has no external space. The building is bounded to the north by Church Road, to the southeast by an adjacent empty plot and to the west by 8 Church Road, a 3 storey building which currently operates as a Thai restaurant with a residential dwelling above. There is no onsite parking and the building is currently accessed via two door openings onto Church Road. There is also an existing ground floor means of escape door which exits onto the adjacent empty plot and a metal stair which provides a secondary means of escape from the upper floors and also drops down into the adjacent empty plot.
- 1.03 From Church road the existing building is formed of two distinct sections. The eastern section (No. 2-4) is a 2 storey red brick Neo Georgian building (constructed approximately 1928) with stone dressings, central stone dressed pediment and balustrading at roof level with a pitched tiled roof. The other western section (No. 6) was constructed as a later infill extension. This is also a 2 storey building consisting of similar red brick at ground floor with a vertical tiled wall to first floor and a flat roof. There are also various single storey red brick flat roof elements at the rear of the site.
- 1.04 The proposal involves creating two smaller commercial units within the ground floor spaces of the old bank. These units would be class E and as we understand the desire for 'in centre' uses in this location so we will exclude class E (g,i-iii) from the allowable uses. Unit A on the left of the plan will be access via a new glazed single door to be installed within the existing historic door opening on the left of the plan. Unit B will be accessed via a new glazed door which will be formed as part of a new shopfront on the far right in the more modern infill building. The historic door in the centre of the plan (right side of the Neo-Georgian building element) will be utilized as a new residential access door.
- 7.01 The first floor change of use will be from the office spaces associated with the bank to residential (Class C3). At this level two new flats will be formed and at second floor a small roof extension will be built over the modern infill building to create enough space along with the converted loft space of the historic building to form a third flat. The flats will be accessed via the existing rear staircase up from ground floor to first floor, this will then be extended up to second floor as part of the roof extensions. As the staircase is positioned towards the rear of the modern infill building a residential corridor will need to be formed at ground floor which links the staircase back to the entrance door. From this corridor there will be access to both an internal bike storage area and an internal bin store. The bin store will then have new doors out to the street for bins to be emptied. This access door will have access control and will only be available to the private contractors who empty the bins. The corridor will also naturally split the building down the middle forming the two commercial units.
- 1.05 Although the residential properties will be eligible for the council waste collection service we have assigned the collection to a private contractor as there is nowhere externally to leave the bins for collection, they would then be left on the highway blocking the pavement. With a private contractor the bins can be left in bin store at all times and just taken out by the contractor when the arranged pick up time is. We have designated all the bins as 2 wheeled only to allow them to be easily wheeled the 18m to the parking bays located on the south side of Church Road where a collection vehicle can wait. These bays are only designated as parking from the hours of 8am-6:30pm so outside

these times could be used for loading which is another reason for using a private contractor who can ensure a pick up time outside these hours. We believe this is how the building was serviced previously and will continue to be serviced in the future.

- 1.06 Reading Borough Council Local Plan (November 2019) Policy H3 stated that on sites of 1-4 dwellings, "a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the borough". A viability assessment has been carried out and included within this application that demonstrates that the level of return in this case is negative and therefore the proposed development cannot be expected to contribute towards Affordable Housing.
- 1.07 The building is currently Freehold under a single owner however the first floor escape stair drops in the adjacent empty plot which is owned by the Council. We have submitted a notification of this application to the council in terms of this.
- 1.08 The site is located within St. Peters Conservation Area and is identified as a building of townscape merit within the Conservation Area Appraisal, this is discussed further in the separate Heritage Statement.

2.0 DESIGN PRINCIPLES & ASPECTS OF SECURITY

- 2.01 The first design principle was deciding the access points for the residential flats. By utilizing the central door (right hand side of the historic building) this provided a route for a new residential corridor to connect directly into the bottom of the existing staircase. This then split the ground floor space into two commercial units. This door way also aesthetically provided the best residential door as it has existing stone mouldings on the surrounds and on the lintel which gave the door way some grandeur. The existing door will be replaced with a solid door which will give residents some privacy and security but due to the existing high level fanlight which we will retain still retain some natural light into the entrance lobby. The door will be controlled by a door entry system, allowing a visitor to call a dwelling then hold a two-way simultaneous conversation between the visitor and occupant of the dwelling. It will allow the occupant to see and identify the visitor and will enable the occupant of the dwelling to remotely operate the electric locking device on the door. This will give visitors access to the first lobby only which will contain secure post and parcel boxes all as recommended by 'Secure by Design'. This is so that deliveries can be made to this space for security and prevent items being left on the street. Occupants will then have the option to remotely allow visitors through the second lobby door. The first lobby will be CCTV monitored and this arrangement will ensure delivery people don't have access then to the rest of the residential spaces.
- 2.02 The building is already quite secure given its previous use as a bank and this will be maintained or improved with this development. The only low level glazed areas are those on the front street elevation which are the most visible and therefore any nefarious activities are easily spotted. This is also true of all the access doors apart from the one existing means of escape door on the side of the building which is a secure solid metal door. This door will be need to be maintained for means of escape if Commercial Unit A on this side of the building utilizes the full unit space available. This will then require a future license to be agreed with the adjacent land owner of the current empty plot for a continued escape route across their land. However another option is possible which would mean retail unit A is reduced in size and escape is only provided in one direction to the front of the unit. To do this the back part of the unit would need to be permanently sealed off with a lockable access door. This area would not be usable space and would be designated as a landlords area with access for maintenance only. It may be the case that a future tenant only wants a smaller unit so they may not need the license over the neighboring land for means of escape.

- 2.03 All new doors, windows and rooflights will be specified as required by 'Secure by Design' recommendations in order to provide a secure building envelope. 24-hour internal lighting (switched using a daylight sensor/photoelectric cells) will be provided to residential communal parts of the development. In the case of areas which don't receive any daylight this would be operated via motion sensors/PIR's. As there is no external space for the site and people access the building directly from the well-lit public street no additional external lighting is proposed. Door entry systems will have integrated internal lighting to allow for easily identifiable controls.

3.0 SCALE

- 3.01 The two commercial units have a mix of sizes from Unit B which is quite small (26.9m² GIA) to Unit A which is quite a bit larger at (115.3 m² GIA). Both of these areas include spaces for DDA Compliant WC's.
- 3.02 At first floor Flat A is the larger of the two flats and provides 2 Bedrooms and is suitable for 3 persons (63m² GIA), Flat B is smaller with only 1 bedroom ideally for 1 person (37m² GIA). At second floor the roof extension along with the converted loft space will form Flat C with 2 bedrooms suitable for 3 persons (68m² GIA). We anticipate this change of use will be welcomed as it will assist the Borough with its housing needs. As this is an existing building being converted into housing we feel that the normal density requirements within the Councils Local Plan can be adapted to suit the constraints of the existing site. We therefore believe this is the most dwellings that can be reasonably provided within this site without over development and also whilst respecting the historic nature of the building. In terms of mix we understand there is a desire for larger family homes of at least 3 bedrooms. However we believe these would be better located in out of centre developments which this is not. Therefore we have still provided 2 flats containing 2 bedrooms which can still house smaller families if needed but could also be easily be adapted to suit couples with a space for home working if need be. The third smaller 1 person flat offers some variety into the development.
- 3.03 The new roof extension at second floor is designed to respect the proportions of the more historic building on the left as much as possible. With a flat roof the new extensions height can be minimized as much as possible keeping this below the pitch line of the historic building. The front of the modern infill building is set back from the front of the historic building keeping it subservient in nature and the extension brickwork will line through with this up to a point. Above this the upper section of the new second floor extension takes the form of a mansard roof with the gutter lining through with the adjacent Neo Georgian parapet on the original bank building. The windows on the to the extension front façade are small dormers reduced in height from the first floor to align with the typical approach for window sizes to decrease as you move up a building. At the rear of the roof extension a mansard roof with small rooflights is proposed as this would be more sympathetic to the original building.

4.0 LAYOUT

- 4.01 The layout of the commercial units was quite straightforward once the residential access route had been formed. All available space was allocated to each unit with a space for a DDA WC towards the back of the units. It was noted that commercial unit A had a large front space that was ideal for a shop floor type arrangement which then narrowed before opening out to another large space albeit with no natural lighting which would be ideal for a store/stock room. Commercial unit B is much smaller and would be more suited to a very small shop or takeaway style set up. These units are speculative and no tenants are currently in line for these. Therefore this application does not show any internal arrangement for these spaces or indeed cover any details such as signage or plant requirements. These elements will need to be covered by separate applications once tenants are in place.

- 4.02 The residential access route also needed to link to spaces for refuse and cycle storage. The refuse storage is accessed via a lobbied space which will need mechanical ventilation. This is required both to stop smells entering the main residential spaces but also for fire regulations. The cycle storage room allows enough space for easily 4 cycles which is in line with the councils recommendations and BREEAM requirements and allows for 0.5 cycles per residential unit.
- 4.03 As shown on the drawings the flat layouts have been set out to match all the area and room requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards. The room sizes shown on the drawings also take into account an internal lining system that we anticipate being required for thermal insulation. Flat A provides 2 Bedrooms and is suitable for 3 persons (63m² GIA) and Flat B has only 1 bedroom for 1 person (37m² GIA). Grouping the entrances to the flats together off the side of the communal staircase meant there was an excess space in an existing small projecting element at the rear to use this as a bathroom, otherwise this space would just be used for an overly long corridor access to Flat A. The main living space was then situated towards the front of property where there is the most space and it can receive the most light. Ideally bedrooms would be all towards the rear to reduce noise however the smaller bedroom in Flat A had to be situated to the front due to space and window restrictions. Flat B also followed this approach with the habitable rooms towards the front of the space and the kitchen and shower room towards the rear, this was again down to space and window restrictions as this was a single aspect space due to the communal stair. Flat C has 2 bedrooms suitable for 3 persons (68m² GIA). Both flats A and C are over the Nationally Described Space Standards because they both have to have quite long corridors in order to work with the restrictions of the existing building. Flat C has bedrooms within the converted loft element which have windows facing the rear for noise reduction. Therefore the living space is towards the front of the new roof extension to benefit from the light and kitchen and bathroom towards the back of this part of the flat where it is single aspect. Rooflights have been included here over the long corridor elements in order to bring some natural daylight into these and a small ensuite is included off the main bedroom due to its distance from the main bathroom.
- 4.04 All the flats contain built in storage both in the bedrooms and for general use as shown on the drawings which matches the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standards. The floor to ceiling height of the flats is at least 2.4m apart from the area in flat C which have been converted in the old loft space where the ceiling drops from 2.4m to 1.5m at the edges of the rooms as shown on the plans and sections.

5.0 APPEARANCE

- 5.01 The brickwork and tiles used on the new extension will match those materials from the original building. We will use dark grey single ply membranes on new and replacement flat roof elements which will provide a watertight, low maintenance finish whilst not detracting from the overall character of the area.
- 5.02 A new Shopfront is proposed to the ground floor commercial unit B in the more modern infill building. This will provide a new access point to the commercial unit and residential bin store as well as commercial shopfront display space. The shopfront will be glazed with dark grey painted timber frames. The shopfront is simple in design with a high level dark grey fascia panel which will tie in with the shopfront while the unit is vacant and then utilized as a signage fascia when the unit is in use. We have not put any historic detailing into the shopfront as we wanted to make it read more with the simplistic nature of the infill building rather than overpower the frontage of the adjacent Neo-Georgian building section. The infill building is also much more modern so we felt it was better to have more modern detailing to this shopfront. However the full height windows which were previously on the infill building have been removed and a new brick stall riser has been constructed below any new glazing so that this level ties in with the windows in the

historic building. The bin store doors will have louvers to allow for ventilation and a small window with an opaque frosted finish to let in light but obscure any details.

- 5.03 The doors to the Neo-Georgian historic building element will be replaced but the existing fanlights above them will be retained. The door on the left will be replaced with a new glazed door with **timber frames** which will tie in with the shopfront used on the infill building. The door to the residential entrance will be a solid 6 panel Georgian door to tie in with the character of this building.
- 5.04 Timber framed sash windows have been proposed to all other windows, to reflect the prevailing character of the conservation area. Those in the more modern infill building will be much simpler with less window bar details than those in the more historic building again to reinforce the subservient nature of this element.
- 5.05 At roof level **3 new dormers have been proposed to the front roof extension and 2** on the rear face of the historic buildings pitched roof. These small characterful dormers will not dominate the roofscape but would still offer valuable extra space and light to the rooms inside so that the old loft space can be re-purposed. They would be finished in grey mock lead GRP clad checks to offer a long lasting, maintenance free construction but still fit in with the traditional lead construction seen in more historic examples. Velux Conservation type Rooflights have also been provided in the new rear mansard element which would be sympathetic to the original building. There are also some simple new rooflights proposed in flat roof locations but these would not be visible from any normal viewpoints.

6.0 LANDSCAPING

- 6.01 As there is currently no external space as part of this site there is no landscaping presently on the site. However the adjacent empty plot has a number of trees, some of which are quite large and shrubs. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of this planning application. The vacant site currently has no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) on it however it is noted that it is in a conservation area so six weeks notification must be given to the local planning authority of any intended tree surgery works, to allow them the option of placing a TPO.
- 6.02 As part of the impact assessment it was noted that the nearest large tree to this site (T4) currently partially overhangs the bank buildings. In order to carry out roofing works etc. to the building and to allow for future maintenance it is proposed that lowest lateral section to the northwest is removed, including the broken hung up section. It is noted that the tree could be removed to alleviate the risk from possible future failure however that is currently not proposed as the tree is not on our land, that is unless we hear otherwise from the council through this application who own the land. Some small overgrown, low quality shrubs (G1, G3 and G7) will also be removed to facilitate future building works as they are currently unsustainable. All other retained trees will be protected including below ground roots as detailed in the report however no other tree works will be carried out to the vacant site as this is not within our ownership.
- 6.03 We are currently proposing a new Sedum green roof to one of the rear flat roofs. This is proposed in order to make some increase in the Biodiversity of the site as discussed further in the Ecology Section. The specific roof area was chosen as it has the easiest access from the communal residential staircase for maintenance. In order to provide this access the cill of one of the existing windows from the staircase has been lowered and the window will be replaced with a timber framed partially glazed door. A fall arrest mansafe system will also be installed to allow for safe movement while on the roof. This roof was also chosen as it will be directly visible from the communal staircase offering some visual interest and greenery for residents.

8.0 ECOLOGY

- 8.01 Various Ecology studies have been carried out by a CIEEM Member (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) Ecologist including a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment, Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan.
- 8.02 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment shows that the will be no impact to any local designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and that there are no notable Habitats on or directly Adjacent to the Site. The existing large tree on the neighbouring vacant site will however be protected during any works as noted in previous sections. There was no presence noted of any Amphibians, Reptiles, Roosting Bats, Badgers, Hedgehogs or Nesting Birds. The habitats recorded on site were also considered to provide poor opportunities for foraging and commuting bats. However the adjacent vacant site has been noted as providing some elevated value for commuting Bats and Birds, albeit small in extent. Therefore the large trees will be protected during the works and it is proposed to install a new Bat Box and Bird Box in order to encourage future Bats and Birds into this area. The new green roof will also provide a new habitat for invertebrates which in turn attract new birds and bats.
- 8.03 The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment along with the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 data shows that the existing site has no existing suitable habitats. Therefore the proposed green roof results in a 100% increase in the Biodiversity of the site and therefore surpasses the minimum target of 10% biodiversity net gain and is thus compliant with legislation (Environment Act 2021) and planning policy (National: NPPF 2021; Reading New Local Plan 2019).
- 8.04 The landscape and Ecology Management Plan provides best practice habitat installation and management prescriptions to ensure the effective installation and long-term success of the proposed new habitats in accordance with the BNG Assessment. This report also notes that there will be no disturbance to any ecology through external lighting schemes as there are no new lights proposed and in fact existing lighting that currently illuminates the escape stair at the rear will be removed.
- 8.05 As shown on the proposed drainage drawing (P25) there are currently no unused drains which will need to be capped off to avoid the risk of rodent ingress in the proposed development. Although it is not proposed to partially clear site at all. It is recognised there is a vacant site adjacent to this one and therefore baiting will be carried out to eradicate rats in this area prior to redevelopment. This is to prevent rat populations which may be disturbed due to the redevelopment of the site causing subsequent problems to residents and businesses in the area.

9.0 FLOODING

- 9.01 The site is located within a Flood Zone 2 area which means the site has a medium probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. A Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out and contains more details on site specific flooding characteristics. The report notes that the risk would appear to be predominantly fluvial as the River Thames is located approximately 62m to the south west of the site. The site is shown to be entirely outside of the modelled EA 1:100 year flood extent, but within the modelled 1:1000 year extent which would put the site up to 0.28m below this flood level. If a 35% climate change increase is applied the site is within the 1:100 year extent and could be up to 0.21m below this flood level.
- 9.02 Although the EA has provided no records of historic flooding at this site and suggests the site lies within an area of 'very low' risk, measures have been proposed in order to counter any future flooding that may occur. The proposal is for the change of use of the existing building, as such it is not practical or feasible to raise the existing finished

ground floor level. Therefore the majority of the 'more vulnerable' residential uses have been sited at first floor with 'less vulnerable' commercial uses at ground floor. In order to meet the EA Standing Advice, as floor levels cannot be raised extra flood resistance and resilience measures will be implemented. Flood proofing of the building will be incorporated as appropriate with flood resistant doors. A flood warning and evacuation plan will be implemented post development. The end user/site manager will register with the free Environment Agency Floodline Alert Direct service.

- 9.03 Safe escape is usually defined as being through slow moving flood water no deeper than 25cm. Safe escape can be provided to the west entirely outside of the modelled 1:100 year plus climate change flood extent. As such once occupants have left the building, an entirely dry escape route can be provided from the site during the design 1:100 year plus climate change flood event.

10.0 AIR QUALITY

- 9.01 The site is located within an Air Quality Management Area. An Air Quality Assessment has been carried out and this shows the Air quality conditions for future residents of the development will be acceptable, with concentrations below the air quality objectives throughout the site. The air quality effect is concluded to be 'not significant' and thus no mitigation is required. Taking into account these conclusions, it is judged that the proposed development is consistent with Paragraph 185 of the NPPF, being appropriate for its location in terms of the air quality conditions for future users. It is also consistent with Paragraph 186, as it will not affect compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives. The proposed development is also consistent with Policy EN15 since the proposed development will neither detrimentally affect air quality in the local area, nor will the future residents be exposed to detrimental air quality effects.

- 9.02 Although the pollutant concentrations will be below the objectives at the new development. It would be best practice to maximise the distance between the inlets and the sources of the pollution such as the road. Therefore we are proposing the use of a mechanical ventilation system to the residential units which will have all intake and extract grilles placed at the rear of the property. This can then be used to maintain a comfortable temperature within the flats without the concerns of pollution and noise.

11.0 TRANSPORT

- 11.01 Due to the existing site constraints and the fact it has no external land it would be impossible to provide any form of parking as part of this development. Therefore a transport statement has been submitted to show the suitability of the site for a car free development. Due to the town centre location with close by facilities and good connections to other forms of transport owing to its highly accessible location, the proposed development can be car-free and would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety as a result.
- 11.02 Cycle parking will be provided in line with Reading Borough Council's standards for the new residential flats. The internal cycle storage room allows enough space for easily 2 Sheffield type hoops which allows for two cycles each to a total of 4 (0.5 cycles per residential unit)
- 11.03 The Transport statement shows that deliveries and servicing of the site can be undertaken from the kerbside of Church Road, or the on-street parking bays located adjacent to the site. The proposals would lead to a reduction in trips associated with the commercial units, whilst the residential units would only generate sustainable trips owing to their 'car-free' nature. The proposals would not lead to a severe cumulative impact on the local highway network or an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

12.0 SUSTAINABILITY

- 12.01 Whilst the size of this development does not constitute a full sustainability statement, Sustainability has been considered throughout the design. A BREEAM pre-assessor has been appointed as described below and they have produced an assessment report demonstrating a BREEAM 'Very Good' standard. During the development of this assessment PV panels were considered to be added to the rear flat roofs, however there is currently not the required roof space here to incorporate the amount required to generate a sufficient amount of energy. Also adding these to any other locations on the building would have a detrimental effect on the Character of the Building and the Conservation area. A green roof has been possible to incorporate on the flat roof areas which will provide additional bio-diversity and help to reduce roof drainage run off. Again new solar shading was considered but this would have too much impact on the external character of the buildings. Decentralized heating systems were also considered however the space requirements for these meant they were difficult to incorporate into this type of development. Instead a new gas heating system will be installed for the residential units with a small efficient combi boiler in each property. Commercial units will have access to Gas and Electricity and would have the option to use either type of energy when they are fitted out. The main way this scheme will reduce waste materials during the construction is by reusing and repurposing these existing buildings with as minimal new/demolition work as possible.
- 12.02 The proposed residential units created through the conversion of the existing building will meet a BREEAM 'Very Good' standard. The associated Energy and Sustainability Statement provides information on the predicted carbon emissions of the development and includes an analysis of the potential contribution that renewable and low carbon technologies could contribute towards reducing the energy and associated CO2 emissions for the scheme. The proposed BREEAM measures to achieve the Very-Good rating include: The project will be registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme and the contractor will be required to follow best practices for environmental management, responsible product sourcing and labour. Along with this a site-waste management plan will be developed for the site as a whole with best practice targets set. All new materials will come from responsible sources, with manufacturers to hold an ISO 14001 certificate as minimum. A commissioning programme will be established by the incoming tenant and all building services will be commissioned in line with CIBSE & BSRIA guidelines. There is almost no external lighting proposed so this will avoid light spillage. Smart meters will be installed to each dwelling. Leak detection and shut off will be introduced, alongside water efficiency measures within the building. An ecologist has been appointed and their advice on habitat management has been followed. Dedicated internal cycle storage will also be provided for each dwelling.

13.0 NOISE

- 13.01 Two noise assessments have been carried out on site by an acoustic consultant. The first is to determine the acoustic insulation of the existing separating floor construction between the commercial ground floor units and the proposed conversion of first-floor residential dwellings and the acoustic insulation of the existing separating partitions at first floor between separate flats. The report demonstrates that the existing construction will satisfy the current minimum requirements of Approved Document E and therefore no additional acoustic treatment would be required to the existing structures. New walls and floors will also be constructed to meet these requirements.
- 13.02 The second report deals with external noise levels impinging on the building and how future residents can be protected from excessive noise. The report shows due to the busy road and pedestrian traffic at the front of the building and this plus third-party M&E and kitchen plant and the pub garden at the rear levels are currently not suitable. It is therefore proposed to install thermal double glazing to all windows and which will achieve the minimum acoustic reduction levels to achieve comfort in accordance with

the relevant design standards. Windows will be openable at the residents discretion but as this will lead to significantly increased noise levels, **therefore they would be better using the proposed mechanical ventilation system.**

- 13.03 Noise and dust should be controlled during construction. The hours of noisy construction, demolition and associated deliveries should be restricted to the hours of 08:00hrs to 18:00hrs Mondays to Fridays, and 09:00hrs to 13:00hrs on Saturdays, and not at any time on Sundays and Bank or Statutory Holidays. Dust will be controlled by firstly setting up fully enclosed scaffolding around the construction areas with full sheeting. Also during any heavy construction works water misting systems can be used to suppress additional dust. **A full Construction Method Statement would be developed with a contractor when one was appointed that would also deal with delivery requirements and any need to temporarily close the parking bays on the road or any areas of the pavement therefore we would expect this to be a pre-commencement condition on any approval.**

14.0 LOCAL CONSULTATION

- 14.01 In order to allow some form of public consultation we have printed flyers as shown below and delivered these to all local residents and business owners. We have also contacted the Ward Councillors and the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee and sent them drawings. At this point have not received any comments back from these.

Dear Resident/Business Owner

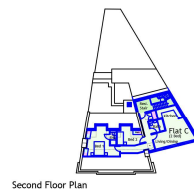
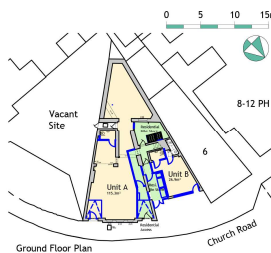
I am contacting you because we will shortly be submitting a planning application for a small new mixed-use development in your area. The address of the property is 2-4 Church Road, Caversham, RG4 7AE and this is the site of the old Barclays Bank which closed in 2020.

This proposal involves creating two smaller commercial units within the ground floor spaces of the old bank with access from Church Road. The smaller unit on the right will require alterations to the frontage. These commercial units will sit either side of new residential access points. The original door openings within the historic building element will provide access, to cycle storage and the existing rear staircase. A new access door will be provided in the frontage to allow the bins to be emptied from the residential bin store, although general residents access will be internal. The existing stair will provide access to the new flats on the upper floors. At first floor we will provide one 2 Bedroom flat and one 1 bedroom flat. The staircase will then be extended to a new second floor with a small roof extension over the flat roof building element on the right. This along with the converted loft space will provide another new 2 bedroom flat.

This scheme looks to reuse and revitalise this existing building, yet in a respectful manner in keeping with its historic features and with no detrimental effect to the area. The introduction of new residential properties will be welcomed as it will assist the Borough with its housing needs. The new commercial units will help provide a more active street frontage and bring back into use a significant part of the local historic street scape. We hope therefore you will support this application but if you do have any comments, please contact me on the email address below in the next 2 weeks.

geoff.ansell@farrellandclark.co.uk

FC Farrell & Clark
Architects



- 14.02 It has been noted that the neighbouring Thai Restaurant at no. 8 Church road has an existing extract vent which top hat cover may overhang our site and therefore impede the new rooftop extension (pictured below). This will need to be slightly adjusted in position or extended in height before the extension work can be carried out. This would be agreed with the neighbouring owner when the project is scheduled to start on site.



15.0 ACCESS

- 14.01 Due to the existing floor levels within the historic building element and street levels there is currently a small ramp provided within the commercial unit entrance (right side door of historic building section) to ramp up about 80mm to provide access into the building. We believe this floor level difference slightly increases towards the left side of the building to nearer 100mm. Therefore another ramped area will need to be provided for these doors to be utilized as an entrance to commercial unit A. Due to the sloping nature of the external pavement we believe there will be no level difference at the far right hand side of the infill building where the new entrance to commercial unit B will be provided. This is beneficial to this unit as it is the smaller unit and so area is not lost to a large ramp. The doors to both of these units will be newly created or replaced to provide wide entry routes which are compliant with the Building Regulations. These access arrangement along with the provision of DDA compliant WC facilities will allow customers in wheelchairs or with other disabilities to enter and use these facilities.
- 14.02 As the site has no parking facilities and limited space it would not be reasonable to provide any of the residential properties as wheelchair accessible either for residents or visitors. The only way this could be achieved would be to incorporate a new lift. The space required for this would remove a large percentage of the available usable space and make this development unfeasible. Instead all attempts will be made to improve the existing staircase to make this as compliant as possible with the Building Regulations.
- 14.03 Whilst the flats are not wheelchair accessible all attempts have been made to make these as spacious and easy to manoeuvre around as possible using many of the building regulation recommendations for wheelchair accessible door sizes and spaces.

15.0 CONCLUSION

This development will bring a currently unused building back into general use and regenerate the site so that the building is maintained for the future. The scheme utilises the maximum development potential of the site while still being respectful to the character of the original buildings and the local conservation area. Taking out the existing external escape stair will remove an existing detrimental element to the character of the building and give space back to the adjacent empty plot so that this also may be redeveloped in the future. The proposed development has no negative

effects on the local ecology, residents or property owners and will help provide a more active street frontage in terms of commercial properties and provide more homes for this area whilst bringing back to life a significant part of the local historic streetscape.