

## **DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT**

**Ward:** Tilehurst

**App Ref:** 240330/FUL

**Address:** 104-108 School Road, Reading, RG31 5AX

**Proposals:** Conversion of first floor from offices to 3 x 1-bed flats (C3 Use Class)

**Case Officer:** Mr Anthony Scholes

**Applicant:** Mrs J Filbee

**Date received:** 13/03/2024

**Valid from:** 13/03/2024

**Target Decision date:** 08/05/2024, extension of time agreed on decision from 22/10/2024

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The proposal site consists of a two-storey building on School Road, Tilehurst. The proposal site is located within Tilehurst Triangle District Centre. The ground floor of the buildings along School Road consist of centre uses at ground floor level, such as shops, restaurants and cafes. The ground floor to 104-108 consists of the Co-op Funeralcare, with the first floor consisting of offices.

104-108 School Road is located within the Article 4 that restricts the conversion of Class E units to residential under permitted development.

### **2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

The proposed development seeks the conversion of the first floor to 104-108 School Road to three 1-bed flats (C3 Use Class). No external alterations are proposed.

Plans considered:

- Dwg No. 3852/202 - Proposed Elevations
  - Dwg No. 3852/201 - Proposed Floor Plans
  - Dwg No. 3852/200 - Block and Location Plan
  - Planning Design & Access Statement
  - Affordable Housing Statement
- Received 13/03/2024
- Dwg No. 3852/203 - Proposed Site Plan
  - Dwg No. 3852/201 Rev E - Proposed Floor Plans
  - Dwg No. 3852/200 Rev C - Block and Location Plan
- Received 1 August 2024

### **3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

880229/ADV - INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED FASCIA SIGN AND PROJECTING BOX SIGN - Application Permitted on 16/01/1989

890074/FUL - INSTALLATION OF NEW SHOP FRONT AND DOUBLE DOORS - Application Permitted on 14/02/1989

980115/ADV - Double sided 6 sheet free standing advertising unit with a central base - Application Permitted on 05/10/1998

221564/CLP - Certificate of lawfulness for proposed change of use from offices to 2 X 1-bed and 1 X 2-bed flats - Application Withdrawn on 07/11/2022

221659/FUL - Conversion of first floor from offices to 3 x 1-bed flats (C3 Use Class) WITHDRAWN 23/10/2023

## **4. CONSULTATIONS**

### ***4.1 The following addresses were consulted by letter.***

General Guarantee Corporation Ltd, 104-108 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AX  
Alldays Stores Ltd, 104-108 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AX  
43 Lambourne Close, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5BE  
45 Lambourne Close, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5BE  
110 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AX  
39 Lambourne Close, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5BE  
41 Lambourne Close, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5BE  
102 School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AX  
108A School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AX  
108B School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AX  
108C School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AX  
108D School Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 5AX

One response was received in relation to car parking management within the site and control of unauthorised use.

### ***4.2 Internal consultees***

The following is a summary of response received from internal consultees.

Reading Borough Council, Transport Development Control

Confirmation of how parking and servicing will be retained for the commercial unit on the ground floor is required.

- In accordance with the Borough's Parking Standards and Design SPD, a minimum provision of 0.5 cycle storage spaces should be provided for each unit, this equates to a total of 2 (rounded up from 1.5) cycle storage spaces. Storage should be covered and secure utilising Sheffield type stands.
- Bin storage should not be located further than 15m from the access point for 2 wheeled containers up to 360 litres and 10m for 4 wheeled containers to avoid the stationing of service vehicles on the carriageway for excessive periods and should comply with Manual for Streets and British Standard 5906: 2005 for Waste Management in Buildings. The Councils Refuse and Recycling team should be contacted to ensure the correct capacity and type of bins are provided for the size of the proposed development.
- Amended plans demonstrate acceptable provision of waste and parking (01/08/2024)

Reading Borough Council, Environmental Protection

- Noise impact on development from the commercial use at ground floor level.

Reading Borough Council, Waste

I can see that this is a conversion from an office on the first floor to 3 flats on the first floor. For a development containing 3 flats, we would expect them to need space for:

- 3 x 140L general waste bins
- 3 x 240L recycling bins
- 3 x 23L food waste bins

The Council's standard household waste collection service is a fortnightly general waste collection, alternating with a fortnightly recycling collection and food waste is weekly.

The business on the ground floor would also need to have space for a separate commercial waste collection.

With that in mind, it would seem that the bin store shown in the plan is not big enough to accommodate the required number of bins.

## **5. EQUALITY ACT 2010**

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

## **6. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. The following local and national planning policy and guidance is relevant to this application:

### **National Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework  
National Planning Practice Guidance

### **Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)**

CC1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction  
CC3 Adaption to Climate Change  
CC5 Waste Minimisation and Storage  
CC6 Accessibility and the Intensity of Development  
CC7 Design and the Public Realm  
CC8 Safeguarding Amenity  
H3 Affordable Housing  
H5 Standards for New Housing  
H8 Residential Conversions  
H10 Private and Communal Outdoor Space  
EN15 Air Quality  
TR1 Achieving the Transport Strategy  
TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters  
TR5 Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging  
RL1 Network and Hierarchy of Centres  
RL3 Vitality and Viability of Smaller Centres

### **SPG/SPD**

Affordable Housing SPD (March 2021)  
Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD (October 2011)  
Planning Obligations under Section 106 SPD (April 2015)  
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (December 2019)

## **7. APPRAISAL**

### **7.1 Land use principles**

The existing building at 104-108 School Road consists of a centre use at ground floor level, with offices above. The existing building is not listed, nor is the proposal site within a Conservation Area. The centre use to the ground floor fronting School Road is to be retained in accordance with Policies RL1 and RL3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. As such, there is no in-principle objection to the proposed additional dwelling, subject to all other matters (as discussed below) being satisfactory.

There is also no in principle objection to the conversion of the first floor of 104-108 School Road to self-contained flats, provided the development complies with the policies set out within the Reading Borough Local Plan, which will be discussed further within this report.

## **7.2 Design**

Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan requires all development to be of high quality design and maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding area. In this specific case; this concerns the following components:

- Layout
- Landscape
- Scale: height and massing; and
- Architectural detail and materials

A small additional fence/wall is proposed to the rear of the building to shield the additional bin storage areas.. In terms of appearance the development would preserve the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development is therefore considered in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

## **7.3 Standards for New Housing**

As this application seeks a replacement dwelling, policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan is applicable.

Policy CC3 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires that development proposal incorporate sustainable design practices to take account of climate change. Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) requires that all new housing is be built to the higher level of water efficiency standards under Building Regulations and achieves at a minimum a 19% improvement in the dwelling emission rates above the Building Regulations standards and details of this in the form of design and construction stage SAP reviews can be secured by way of conditions.

The proposed dwellings exceed the minimum gross internal floor areas and storage requirements as set out in policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. The gross internal floor space of the three flats are as follows: Flat 1 = 52.75m<sup>2</sup>; Flat 2 = 47.4m<sup>2</sup>; Flat 3 = 39.4m<sup>2</sup>. All of the proposed flats are above the minimum space requirement of 39m<sup>2</sup> for a one bed, one-person, one storey dwelling. Therefore, the proposed development is considered in accordance with policy H5 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

## **7.4 Safeguarding Amenity**

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity, which states that proposals are acceptable where they will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties with regard to:

- *Privacy and overlooking*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development*
- *Harm to outlook*

The proposed dwelling is located within a district centre along a busy highway. Residential units above commercial units along a district centre are considered typical, with the development proposed under this application considered unlikely to harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents or harm the day to day running of local businesses. The living conditions of future occupants of the proposed flats will be safeguarded from noise and disturbance from the commercial units through sound proofing, the details of which are to be secured via condition.

Overall, the proposed dwelling is not considered to harm the living conditions to neighbouring properties or the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposed development is considered in accordance with policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan. It is considered necessary however to condition the approval of this application to ensure that details of noise mitigation from the commercial use to the ground floor of 104-108 School Road is provided. This

is to preserve the living conditions of future occupants to the proposed dwelling at 104-108 School Road.

### **7.5 Private and Communal Outdoor Space**

This proposal has also been assessed against Reading Borough Local Plan policy H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space, which states that:

- *Usable outdoor space for houses should be no less than the gross floor area of the dwelling. To which it relates.*

It is acknowledged that the development would not provide a private outdoor amenity space to the proposed flat. Nevertheless, the proposal site is located within 400m of Blagrove Recreation Ground to the east of the proposal site. The development has also secured suitable provision for bike storage and bin storage, through the conversion of the plant room and former stairwell to the ground floor. The location of the proposed flat also benefits from being close to local amenities and conveniences. Therefore, on balance, the lack of private amenity space to the proposed flat is not considered harmful enough to warrant a recommendation of refusal for this application on this basis.

### **7.6 Transport**

The proposed development is to make use of the existing parking arrangement to the rear of 104-108 School Road. Whilst no vehicle parking spaces are provided for the development, there is no change from the existing arrangement. The location of the proposed dwelling also benefits from strong sustainable transport links to buses and cycle routes. The proposed non-provision of vehicle parking is therefore considered acceptable. The proposed conversion of the first floor to three self-contained flats is not considered to result in an increase in demand for vehicle parking spaces given the existing use of the first floor as an office.

Conditions have been will be included to ensure that the proposed bin and cycle storage is carried out in accordance with the approved details. This is to ensure that an appropriate level of cycle parking is secured within this development in accordance with CC8 and TR3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

### **7.7 Affordable Housing**

In accordance with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan; *“Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading:*

- *(...) on sites of 1 - 4 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 10% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough.”*

The applicant has agreed to enter into a legal agreement to secure a financial contribution if planning were to be granted.

A Section 106 Legal Agreement has been drawn up, which secures a financial contribution of £28,125 for the purposes of providing affordable housing elsewhere within the Borough. The figure has been calculated based on the valuations of the existing dwelling and the proposed additional dwelling from two Estate Agents. As per Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD (2021); for sites of 1-4 dwellings, where the contribution required by policy H3 is 10%, this will equate to 5% of GDV of the development.

This is considered acceptable and complies with Policy H3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan and the Affordable Housing SPD (2021).

### **7.8 CIL**

The proposal includes the addition of more than 100sqm of new floor space and so would be CIL liable.

The standard informative is recommended to be included on the decision notice to advise the applicant of this separate process and requirement.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

The proposed development has been assessed and the proposed works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and planning permission can be granted.

## **9. RECOMMENDATION**

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