

Planning Department
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Our ref: 4615

28 March 2025

Dear Sir/ Madam

Application for full planning permission – external alterations to 5-6 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS

On behalf of our client, Abodi Estates Limited (“the Applicant”), we apply for full planning permission to the Local Planning Authority for external alterations to 5-6 Southern Court, South Street, Reading, RG1 4QS (“the site”).

The external alterations sought are as follows:

- Installation of three windows
- Installation of three doors
- Remove one door (right flank elevation)

The following plans are submitted with the application:

- Location and Block Plan (dwg no. 1944-001)
- Existing Plans and Elevations (dwg no. 1944-002)
- Proposed Plans (dwg no. 1944-003)
- Proposed Elevations (dwg no. 1944-004)



Site Description

The site comprises two planning units of office accommodation within a three-storey building located on the south side of South Street, close to the junction with East Street (to the west). The site falls within a row of five other similar office buildings each comprising two planning units, all of which form Southern Court. There is shared level car parking to the rear.

The site is not located within a Conservation Area nor is it located within an Article 4 designation. The site is located within flood zone 1.

The image below shows the South Street frontage of the three-storeys premises.



Planning History of the Site

Following a review of the Council's online planning register there are no applications identified against Unit 6 and as such it is concluded that the lawful use of this planning unit remains as originally granted, as an office within Use Class E, having previously fallen within Use Class B1a (Office).



In respect of 5 Southern Court, the planning history identifies a single application (reference 191351) for the change of use of the ground floor from B1 Business to D1 Non-Residential Institution and was approved 3 October 2019. The advice from the selling agent indicates that the ground floor was used by St Mungo's registered charity as administrative offices. Unit 5 therefore also currently has a lawful use as Class E, having previously fallen within Use Class B1 and D1 (ground floor only) prior to the introduction of the new Use Classes in September 2020.

The site is currently subject to determination of a prior approval application for the change of use of the building from Class E (business) (formerly B1) to class C3 (residential dwellings) (ref. **PL/25/0344**), in accordance with Part 3 Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). The prior approval application seeks to convert the building to create 18 no. residential dwellings with the following mix:

- 5 x 1-bedroom at first floor;
- 4 x 1 bedroom at second floor; and
- 2 x 1 bedroom at the first floor.

Proposed Development

This planning application seeks alterations to facilitate the functioning of the building for residential development, supporting the prior approval application being determined. Specifically, the following alterations are required:

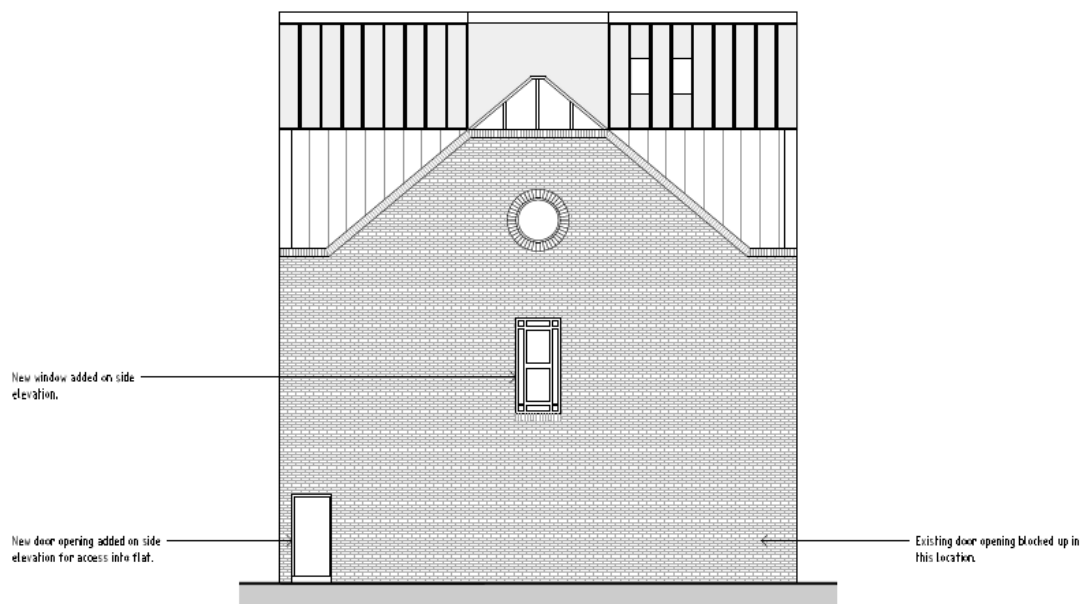
- Installation of three windows (two roof windows and one window on flank elevation)
- Installation of three doors (one door on right flank elevation and two doors on the rear elevation)
- Remove one door (right flank elevation)

The following units will benefit from the external alterations:

- Plot 1 – new door opening
- Plot 4 – new door with incorporated window
- Plot 7 – block up existing door and relocate
- Plot 12 – window to bedroom
- Plot 14 – roof lights
- Plot 17 – proposed opening rooflights
- Plot 18 – proposed opening rooflights



Front elevation



Right flank elevation



Figure 1 – extracts of Proposed Elevations (dwg no. 1944-004)

Planning Policy

Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Policy Context

The relevant parts of the Development Plan, against which the Application is to be assessed, include the Local Plan (2019).

Material considerations

The Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) are both material considerations.

Assessment

Policy CC7 of the Local Plan supports development of high-quality design that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The criteria set out in CC7 is consistent with paragraph 135 of the NPPF in that developments will be required to function well; be visually attractive; sympathetic to the local character; establish or maintain a strong sense of place; optimise the potential of the site to



accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development; and create spaces that are safe, inclusive and accessible. Checklist 19 (CC7) of the SPD states that *'where possible a level access from the public highway to the building's principal entrance should be provided or retained.'* The proposed development will maintain a strong sense of place, is sympathetic to the surrounding area and does not alter the amount/ mix of development. The proposed development will provide three further access points to/from the building which are level with the footpath, therefore according with this requirement. The proposed development is compliant with Policy CC7 of the Local Plan, paragraph 135 of the NPPF and checklist 19 of the SPD.

Policy CC8 of the Local Plan requires development not to have a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties. Specifically relevant to this application is the 'access to sunlight and daylight'. The additional windows will ensure a better quality of living for residents, enhancing sunlight and daylight. There will only be one additional window provided in the flank elevation, minimising any potential overlooking into the neighbouring properties. The proposed development is compliant with Policy CC8.

The granting of this application will support the prior approval application for the conversion to 18 dwellings currently being determined. The Zenith House High court Judgement¹ sets out that LPAs can apply conditions to Class MA applications to tie works from a full planning application for external alterations. This can be secured via a condition on the applications to restrict the occupation of the building in residential use until the external works have been carried out.

If you have any questions following a review of this letter and details of the application, please contact the writer of this letter as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

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¹ LW Zenith Ltd, R. (On the Application Of) v Secretary of State for England and Wales High Court (Administrative Court)