

Design and Access Statement

Change of Use and Extensions

**Application Site: Three Fives Fish & Chips,
555 Oxford Road,
Reading,
RG30 1HL**

This Design and Access Statement supports a planning application for:

- Change of use of part of the ground floor from commercial use (Use Class E) to residential use (Use Class C3)
- Modest extensions to the existing building
- Internal alterations to provide a five-bedroom dwelling

The proposals have been prepared in accordance with the planning framework set out in the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019) and the Council's design and housing objectives.

Site Context and Description

The application site comprises a Victorian end-of-terrace (semi-detached) mixed-use building located on Oxford Road, Reading. Oxford Road is characterised by a varied mix of commercial and residential properties.

The property currently comprises:

- Ground floor commercial use (fish and chips takeaway)
- Residential accommodation on the first and second floors

The building retains its traditional Victorian architectural character and makes a positive contribution to the streetscape along Oxford Road (Image 1: 555 Oxford Road – Front View).

Opening Hours

- Monday to Saturday, including bank holidays 17:00 – 22:00 pm
- Sundays Closed



Image: 1 (555 Oxford Road Front View).

Existing Use and Floor Areas

The existing accommodation includes:

- Ground floor: Commercial takeaway with associated storage
- First and second floors: Residential accommodation

There are two existing front entrances:

- A primary customer entrance serving the takeaway
- A secondary entrance providing access to storage and the remainder of the building

The existing internal floor area is:

- 99.45 sqm (including external walls)
- 90.28 sqm (excluding external walls)

Proposed Development

The proposals include:

- Change of use of the ground floor from commercial to residential use
- Extensions as follows:
 - Side and rear extension: 10.28 sqm (including external walls) / 6.47 sqm (excluding external walls)
 - Front and rear setback extension: 4.77 sqm (including external walls) / 4.19 sqm (excluding external walls)

Following the proposed extensions, the total internal floor area will be:

- 105.25 sqm (including external walls).
- 92.15 sqm (excluding external walls).

No changes are proposed to the overall floor areas of the upper floors. Internally, the first-floor rear bedroom will be converted into a kitchen, while the second floor will remain unchanged. The completed development will provide a single five-bedroom dwelling (Use Class C3).

Planning Policy Context

The proposal has been developed with regard to the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019), which forms the statutory development plan for the area and the principal basis for determining planning applications.

The Local Plan supports:

- High-quality residential development on previously developed land in sustainable locations.
- The efficient reuse of existing buildings within established urban areas
- Residential conversions where they contribute positively to housing supply and the creation of mixed and sustainable communities

The proposal results in no loss of residential accommodation and strengthens the residential function of the building. It also preserves the character and appearance of the existing built form, in accordance with relevant Local Plan policies relating to design quality and residential development.

Relevant Local Plan Policies

The proposal has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019). Key policies of relevance include:

- CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, supporting efficient use of land in sustainable urban locations.
- CC2 – Sustainable Design and Construction, ensuring development responds positively to its context.
- CC7 – Design and the Public Realm, requiring development to respect local character, scale, and appearance.
- CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity, ensuring no unacceptable impacts on neighbouring occupiers in terms of daylight, outlook, privacy, or noise.
- H5 – Housing Quality, promoting good internal space standards and residential amenity.
- H7 – Conversions, supporting the conversion of existing buildings to residential use where design quality and living conditions are acceptable.
- TR3 – Access, Traffic and Highway Impacts, ensuring safe and suitable access arrangements.

- TR5 – Car and Cycle Parking, supporting appropriate parking provision and sustainable transport choices.

The proposal is considered to comply with the above policies by reusing an existing building, providing a high-quality residential environment, and preserving the character and amenity of the surrounding area.

Design Assessment

The design approach has been informed by:

- Respect for the existing Victorian architectural character
- Appropriate scale and massing to ensure extensions remain subordinate to the host building
- Sensitive integration with the surrounding terrace
- Minimal external alteration to maintain visual continuity along the street

The proposed extensions and internal alterations retain the building's established proportions and architectural rhythm. External materials and finishes will be selected to match the existing building, ensuring a cohesive appearance and protecting the quality of the streetscape.

Access and Circulation

Access arrangements will utilise the existing points of entry:

- The former commercial entrance will be incorporated into the residential layout
- The secondary entrance will continue to serve internal circulation

No changes are proposed that would adversely affect accessibility. The removal of the commercial use will significantly reduce visitor numbers, deliveries, and associated activity, resulting in improved pedestrian safety and residential amenity.

Waste, Cycle Storage, Parking and Daylight

The proposed development includes appropriate provision for refuse, recycling, and cycle storage. A new front garden area will accommodate separate and clearly defined storage for the collection of recyclable and general waste bins, ensuring ease of access for residents and collection services while maintaining a tidy and visually unobtrusive appearance.

Both the front and rear garden areas will include designated bicycle storage. Larger bicycles will be accommodated within the rear garden, while smaller bicycles will be stored at the front, providing convenient and secure facilities in accordance with sustainable transport principles.

The site benefits from the availability of on-street parking along Wilson Road and Little John's Lane, which will serve future residents. The removal of the existing commercial use will reduce parking demand associated with customer visits and deliveries, resulting in no adverse impact on local parking conditions.

The proposal has been designed to ensure that all newly created habitable spaces receive sufficient levels of natural daylight. Furthermore, the scale and siting of the extensions will not result in any unacceptable loss of daylight or sunlight to neighbouring properties.

Ecology

No Feature of Ecology on the Site.

The site comprises a Victorian end-of-terrace building with small front and rear garden areas. The surrounding area is urban in character, with a mix of residential and commercial properties. There are no designated ecological sites or protected habitats within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Existing Trees

The site itself does not contain any trees.

There is an existing tree located on neighbouring land immediately to the rear of the application site, positioned behind the existing rear storage wall. The tree is not located within the application boundary. However, the proposed development has been designed to avoid direct impact on the neighbouring tree.

Residential Amenity and Impact

The proposal will enhance residential amenity by:

- Removing the commercial use, thereby reducing noise, odour, and disturbance
- Providing a functional and well-organised residential layout with appropriate internal space standards
- Ensuring no unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties in terms of privacy, daylight, or outlook

The change of use supports the Local Plan's objective of delivering high-quality housing in accessible and sustainable locations.

Conclusion

The proposed change of use and associated extensions at 555 Oxford Road represent a design-led and policy-compliant residential conversion that:

- Makes efficient use of an existing building on previously developed land
- Enhances residential amenity and reduces commercial disturbance
- Respects the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding streetscape
- Complies with relevant policies of the Reading Borough Local Plan

The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in planning and design terms and are respectfully submitted for approval.

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