

Development Management
Planning Services
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
19 Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

28th November 2025

Dear Sir or Madam,

RE: Planning application for the change of use of the commercial (office) property from Class E to residential to create one 1-bedroom self-contained unit at 2a - 2c Donnington Gardens, Reading, RG1 5LY

DC Planning, instructed by basement Design Studios, is pleased to enclose a Planning Statement to support a full planning application for the change of use of the commercial (office) property from Class E to residential to create one 1-bedroom self-contained unit, at 2a - 2c Donnington Gardens, Reading, RG1 5LY (hereafter referred to as 'the site' or 'the property').

This application has been prepared given the site's location within an area restricted by an Article 4 restriction.

This statement sets out an assessment against the relevant Local Plan policies and should be read in conjunction with the associated submission documents.

The Site

The site comprises an existing single-storey office unit comprising 43,87 sqm, historically split into three separate units but most recently in use as a single office unit. The internal space comprises of office space with an ancillary kitchenette and wc within the rear of the property.

The property fronts Donnington Gardens and abuts residential properties and is within and characterised by traditional residential streets. The site comprises an off street parking area in front of the office unit that is accessed directly from Donnington Gardens.

The site was most recently in use as an office until around August 2025. The site is not located within a Conservation Area.

The site is well located and well-connected to the public transport services nearby. The site is within walking distance of the facilities and amenities on Erleigh Road. An image of the existing condition of the site is included below for ease:



Figure 1: An image of the entrance to Mandeville Courtyards as accessed from Warriner Gardens to the north.

The Proposal

The proposal comprises the change of use of the existing office space spread over the single storey unit to create a one-bedroom residential unit.

No external works are proposed as part of this application.

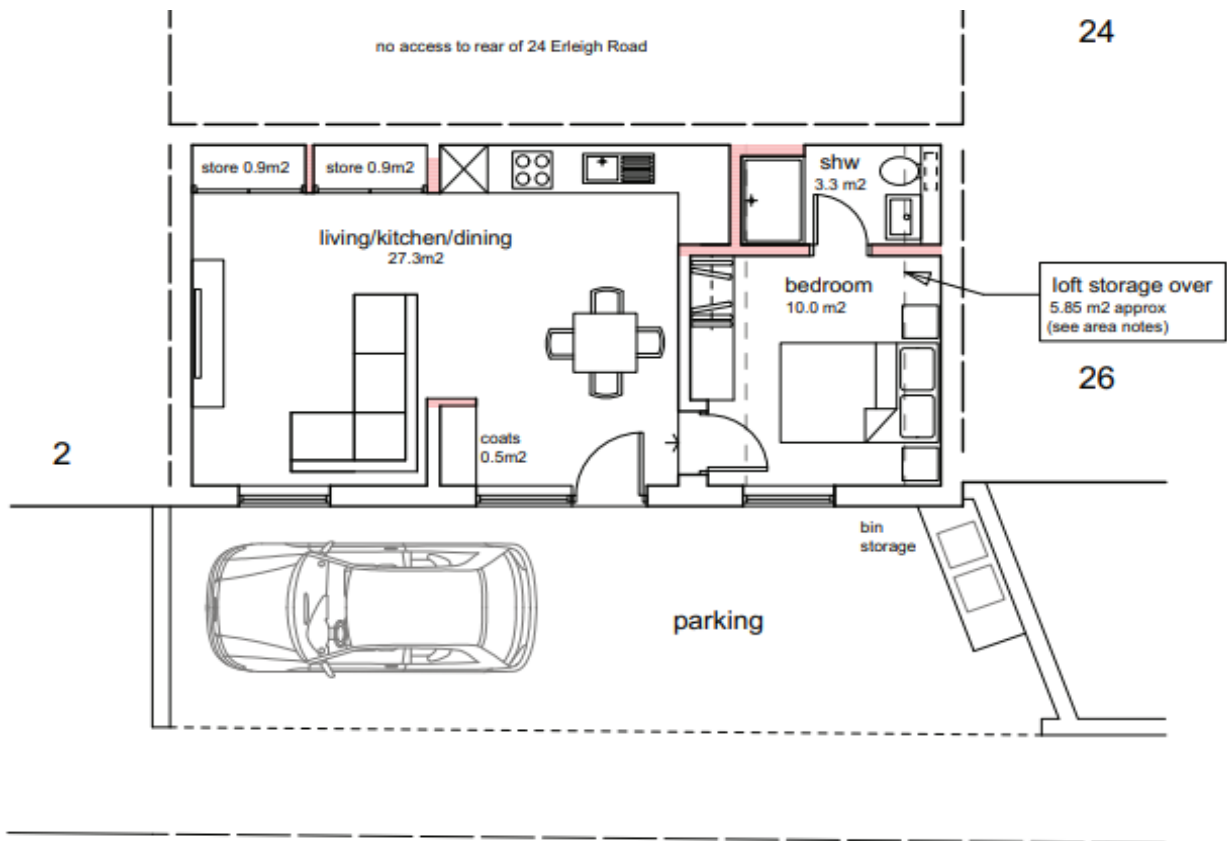
The proposal would create a high-quality, 50.00 sqm one-bedroom residential unit with the open plan living / kitchen / dining room situated at the western end of the property and an en-suite bedroom at the eastern of the property.

The proposed unit would include significant areas of internal storage space with additional storage located within the loft areas. Externally, bin storage and sufficient space for one off-street parking would be provided to serve the proposed residential unit.

The internal floor-to-ceiling heights at the would be 2.40m. Therefore, the floor-to-ceiling heights exceed the minimum requirements for residential dwellings.

The proposal would create a high-quality residential unit that is commensurate with the other residential properties that exist along Donnington Gardens.

The proposed development is illustrated in Figures 2, 3 and 4 below.



DONNINGTON GARDENS

Figure 2: Proposed Floor Plan



Figure 3: Proposed Elevation

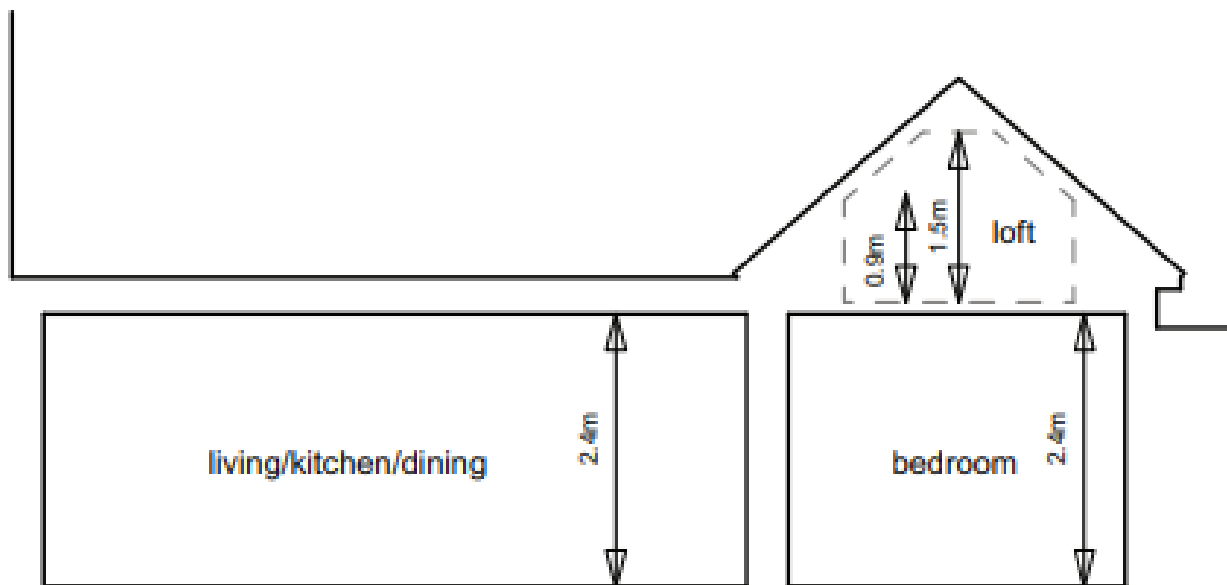


Figure 4: Proposed Section

Assessment

Relevant planning policies of the adopted Reading Local Plan (2019) include, but not limited to:

- CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
- CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
- EM1: PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT
- EM2: LOCATION OF NEW EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT
- EM3: LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND
- H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING
- RL1: NETWORK AND HIERARCHY OF CENTRES

The site is in a relatively unconstrained location. Therefore, the two key issues relevant to the proposal are considered to be:

- Principle of Development
- Design Quality and Residential Amenity

Principle of Development

Local Plan Policy EM2 seeks to direct all new employment development to the designated Core Employment Areas as identified on the adopted Local Plan Policies Maps (2019). The site is not located within an Core Employment Area and therefore it is considered not be located within an area that is expected to maintain a major level of employment provision.

The site is located within the Erleigh Road Local Centre as identified within Local Plan Policy RL1. The Local Centre of Erleigh Road is characterized by mixed use properties along Erleigh Road and residential properties along the side roads that connect to Erleigh Road. Donnington Gardens is a residential road that connects to Erleigh Road.

Policy EM3 acknowledges that the loss of employment land can take place in Local Centres and other centres outside of Core Employment Areas. The Policy sets out a sub criteria that should be considered, as follows:

- (i) *Is access by a choice of means of transport, including access to the strategic road network, poor, and likely to remain poor?*
- (ii) *Is the continued use of the site for employment, including the potential for redevelopment for employment uses, viable?*
- (iii) *Is there a surplus of a similar size and type of accommodation in Reading?*
- (iv) *Would continued employment use of the site detrimentally affect the amenity and character of a residential area?*
- (v) *Is the need for alternative uses stronger than the need for the retention of employment land?*
- (vi) *Would the proposal result in a piecemeal loss of employment land where there is potential for a more comprehensive scheme*

The adjoining properties to the application site are both residential properties. Therefore, it is considered that the application site is an anomaly along Donnington gardens and the change of use to residential would be commensurate with the character of Donnington Gardens and wider pattern of development around the Erleigh Road Local Centre.

There is no demand for the scale, quality and type of office use in this location and there is sufficient, more suitable alternatives within the local area that meet the local needs for employment use.

The change of use of the property would not detract from the overall purpose and functionality of the Local Centre, nor would it have any unacceptable residential amenity impacts on the surrounding properties.

In light of the above assessment, the principle of the change of use in this location should be supported. The proposed development complies with policies EM1, EM2 and EM3 of the Local Plan (2019) and therefore should be supported.

Design

The proposed development would create a high-quality, self-contained residential unit that would tie in well with the high quality surrounding residential area.

The proposed development would create a one-bedroom unit extending 49.72 sqm. The National Described Space Standards (NDSS) require all one-bedroom units to be a minimum of 50 sqm, however given that the development provides 49.72 sqm, the very marginal shortfall in floor area would be outweighed by the overall, well-lit, high quality self-contained unit that would be delivered.

The internal floor-to-ceiling heights would be 2,4m throughout the proposed self-contained unit and therefore meet the NDSS. All other space standards and dimension requirements of the NDSS would be complied with.

There are minimal external alterations proposed. An improved refuse storage area would be delivered adjacent to the off-street parking area that would be retained to serve the prospective residents of the proposed residential unit.

Given the minimal extent of external alterations, there would be no unacceptable amenity impacts on neighbouring properties and residents. The proposed change of use would result in a residential use that is commensurate of the uses along Donnington Gardens and the wider area. Therefore, the proposal is considered to comply with relevant parts of the Local Plan policies outlined above.

All habitable rooms within the proposed residential unit would be served by adequate natural daylight and therefore comply with Local Plan policies.

The proposed development would provide a high quality 50 sqm one-bedroom self contained residential unit with off street parking, external storage and sufficient internal storage. The proposed residential unit would not have any unacceptable amenity impacts on neighboring properties or the wider surrounding area.

Therefore, the proposed development complies with relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan (2019) and should be supported by Officers.

Conclusion

In summary, the proposed development complies with the relevant policies of the Reading Local Plan (2019) and provide a high-quality self-contained residential unit in a sustainable location.

We would be grateful for the Council's considered assessment of the application and we respectfully request that planning permission is granted as the proposal complies with all relevant Development Plan policies.

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you require any further information – my email address is will@dcplanning.co.uk should you need to get in touch.

Yours faithfully,

for DC Planning



Will de Cani
Managing Director