

PLANNING STATEMENT

For

20 Coldicutt Street, Caversham, Reading RG4 8DU

Retrospective change of use from mixed use (Class E and Class C3) to 2 self-contained residential units (Class C3), including internal alterations.

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a retrospective full planning application at 20 Coldicutt Street, Caversham, Reading RG4 8DU.

The application seeks planning permission for:

- The change of use of the building from Class E (Commercial) to Class C3 (Residential); and
- Associated internal reconfiguration to provide two self-contained residential units

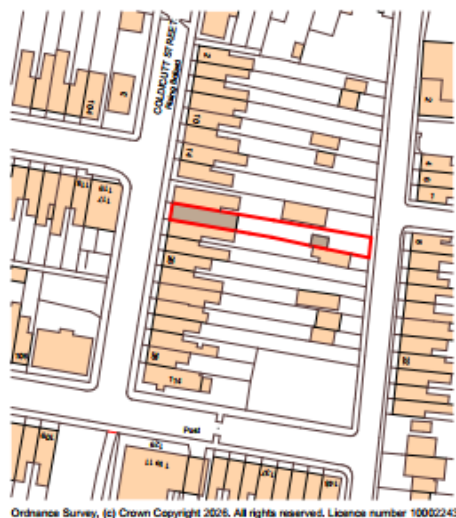
The development has already been implemented, and this application seeks to regularise the use.

2. Site and Surroundings

The site is located within Lower Caversham, a predominantly residential area characterised by terraced properties, interspersed with small-scale commercial uses at ground floor level.

The application property forms part of an established terrace and was historically used as a butcher's shop at ground floor, with residential accommodation above.

The surrounding area is residential in character, and the proposal reflects this prevailing pattern of development.



Location Plan

3. Description of Development

The application seeks retrospective planning permission for the change of use of the ground floor from Class E (commercial) to Class C3 (residential), resulting in the consolidation of the building into wholly residential use comprising two self-contained flats, including the retention of the existing first floor flat and the creation of one additional unit at ground floor level.

The proposal includes internal reconfiguration of the ground floor to provide a compliant one-bedroom unit with a floorspace of approximately 41m², exceeding 37sqm and improving the functionality and quality of accommodation.

The upper floors comprise an existing lawful first floor flat, with ancillary loft space at second floor level.

The existing first floor flat currently utilises part of the rear ground floor section as a kitchen, located within a flat roof rear extension. At present, the first floor flat does not benefit from direct access to the rear garden.

The proposal rationalises this arrangement by reconfiguring the internal layout. The ground floor is re-planned to create a compliant self-contained unit, whilst the existing rear flat roof extension is utilised to re-site the kitchen serving the first floor flat.

This reconfiguration enables both units to function independently, improves the quality of accommodation, and allows for appropriate access to rear amenity space for both flats.

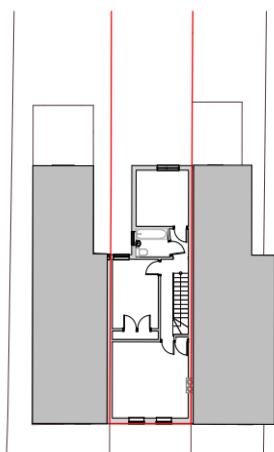
The accommodation is arranged as follows:

- **Ground Floor:**
A self-contained one-bedroom flat (Flat 1 – approx. 41m²), including kitchen, living space and access to private rear amenity space, together with bin storage and cycle parking
- **First Floor:**
Main accommodation for Flat 2, including living room, bedroom and bathroom
- **Second Floor:**
Ancillary storage space associated with the upper unit

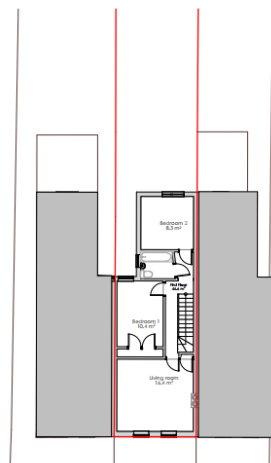
The proposal involves:

- No extensions or increase in footprint
- No alterations to the external appearance of the building
- No increase in scale, height or built form

The development therefore represents a reconfiguration of the internal layout only, rather than an intensification of development.



Existing First Floor



Proposed First Floor

4. Site & Development Schedule

The application site extends to approximately 235.6m², as defined by the red line boundary.

Existing Floorspace

The existing building provides a total Gross Internal Area (GIA) of approximately 98.9m², comprising:

- Flat 1: 31.7m²
 - Flat 2: 66.0m²
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Proposed Floorspace

Following internal reconfiguration, the building provides:

- Flat 1 (Ground Floor): 41.0m²
- Flat 2 (Upper Floors): 57.9m²

The proposal does not increase the overall floorspace of the building. Instead, it redistributes the existing internal area to provide a more balanced and functional layout.

Built Form

- The proposal retains the existing footprint, scale and built form
- No extensions or additional built volume are proposed

The proposal therefore represents a reconfiguration of the existing building, rather than an intensification of development.

Materials and External Appearance

The external appearance remains unchanged, with existing materials retained:

- Walls: Render
 - Windows: White uPVC
 - Doors: White uPVC
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5. Principle of Development

The principle of residential use is acceptable.

The building is located within a sustainable urban area and already contains a lawful residential unit. The proposal therefore represents a logical and appropriate consolidation of the existing mixed-use building into wholly residential use.

The development aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which supports:

- The efficient use of land
- The reuse of existing buildings
- The delivery of housing within sustainable locations

The proposal makes effective use of previously developed land and contributes to housing supply.

6. Residential Quality

The proposed development provides a suitable standard of accommodation.

The internal layout has been designed to provide:

- Clearly defined living, sleeping and kitchen areas
- Functional and efficient use of space
- Improved usability of the ground floor
- Independent and practical layouts for both units

The reconfiguration resolves the existing reliance of the first floor flat on ground floor space and ensures both units operate as fully self-contained dwellings.

7. Flood Risk and Sequential Approach

7.1 Flood Risk Context

The site is located within **Flood Zone 3**, as identified by the Environment Agency. This is fully acknowledged and has been addressed through the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

7.2 Nature of Development in Flood Zone 3

The proposal:

- Relates to an existing building
- Does not increase footprint or built form
- Does not introduce new development into the floodplain

It therefore represents the reuse of an existing structure, rather than new development within a high-risk area.

7.3 Flood Risk Assessment Findings

The FRA confirms:

- Ground floor level at 37.97m AOD
- Above:
 - 1% AEP + climate change flood level (37.89m AOD)
 - 0.1% AEP flood level

Therefore:

- The building is at low risk of fluvial flooding
 - Also low risk from:
 - Surface water
 - Groundwater
 - Sewer flooding
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7.4 Vulnerability

Whilst the proposal introduces residential use at ground floor level:

- The building already includes residential accommodation
 - The overall vulnerability classification remains unchanged
 - There is no material increase in flood risk
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7.5 Exception Test

Wider Benefits

- Reuse of an existing building
- Delivery of housing in sustainable location

Safe for its Lifetime

- Floor levels exceed flood levels
- No increased flood risk elsewhere
- Safe access and egress retained
- Resilience measures included

7.6 Conclusion on Flood Risk

The proposal is:

- Safe for its lifetime
- Supported by robust technical evidence
- Fully compliant with national policy

There are no flood risk grounds for refusal.

8. Impact on Character

As the proposal involves no external alterations:

- The building's appearance remains unchanged
- The character of the street scene is preserved

The proposal, we believe, is therefore acceptable in design terms.



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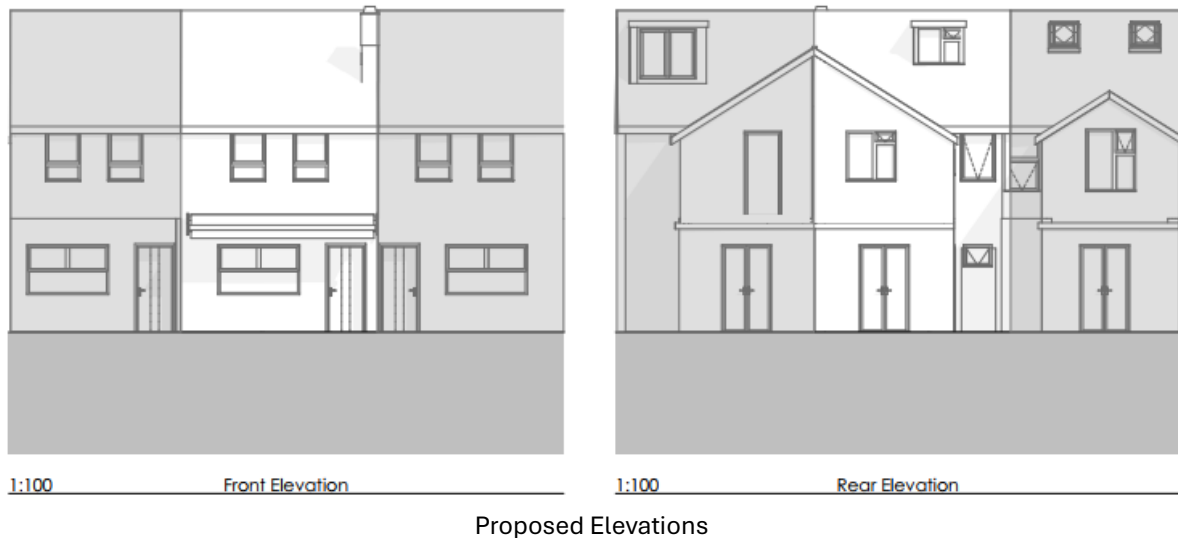
Front Elevation



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Rear Elevation

Existing Elevations



9. Residential Amenity

The proposal will not give rise to adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity.

There will be no:

- Overlooking
- Loss of light
- Noise or disturbance

We believe the development is compatible with the surrounding residential environment.

10. Highways and Access

No changes to access arrangements are proposed.

The use of the building as residential is comparable to, or less intensive than the former commercial use and will not result in adverse highways impacts.

11. Planning Policy Context

The proposal has been assessed against relevant national and local planning policy.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The proposal accords with the NPPF, in particular:

- Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development, through the efficient reuse of an existing building
 - Chapter 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes, by providing additional residential accommodation
 - Chapter 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change, with the submitted FRA demonstrating the development is safe for its lifetime
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Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

The proposal accords with the following policies:

- Policy EN14 (Flood Risk)
The submitted Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the development is safe for its lifetime, with finished floor levels above the design flood level and no increase in flood risk elsewhere.
 - Policy CC1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
The proposal represents sustainable development through the reuse of an existing building within an established urban area.
 - Policy CC6 (Design and the Public Realm)
The proposal involves no external alterations and therefore preserves the character and appearance of the area.
 - Policy H5 (Housing Mix)
The scheme provides smaller residential units in a sustainable location, contributing to local housing supply.
 - Policy EN5 (Environmental Nuisance / Amenity)
The proposal does not result in any adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity.
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Summary of Policy Compliance

The proposal is consistent with both national and local planning policy, particularly in respect of:

- Sustainable development
 - Flood risk safety
 - Efficient reuse of land
 - Protection of residential amenity
 - Preserving character
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12. Conclusion

This retrospective application seeks to regularise the change of use of the ground floor and the reconfiguration of the building to provide two self-contained residential units.

The proposal:

- Retains the existing lawful residential use
- Provides one additional residential unit
- Makes efficient use of an existing building
- Maintains the character of the area
- Is demonstrably safe in flood risk terms
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We believe that the development is fully compliant with planning policy and planning permission should be granted.