

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Katesgrove

App Ref: PL/26/0241 Full planning permission AND PL/26/0243 Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)

Address: 1 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD, READING, RG2 7AB

Proposal: Proposed change of use of existing Grade II Listed Building building Doctors Surgery to three apartments.

AND

Listed Building Consent Proposal: Works associated with the proposed change of use of existing Grade II Listed Building Doctors Surgery to three apartments.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs S and J Dhanjal

Received date: 24 November 2025

Target Decision date: Originally 22 April 2026, agreed extension of time to 8 September 2026

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

This is a Grade II listed building, originally a detached house from the Georgian Period, which was altered through the use of surgery, resulting in changes to the internal layout and circulation, possible loss of some original features, and the erection of a two-storey modern rear extension. It lies within the Christchurch Conservation Area.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposed development seeks a change of use from a doctors surgery, to three flats. The proposal would see one flat on each floor, with a 2-bed flat within the basement, and 2 x 3-bed flats on first and second floors. Around the site, the application would seek to return the rear of the site to landscaped areas for the development, including a bin store to the very rear, and a communal paved barbeque area to the rear. There would be limited external alterations, with several new lightwells around the site for the basement, as well as a new entrance stairs for the basement.

Supporting information

Application Form

CIL Form

The 'Ashdown Site Investigation', Preliminary ground contamination risk assessment report

The 'Green Easy', BREEAM Pre-assessment Summary Report, dated 9 January 2026

The 'Venners Arboriculture', Arboricultural method statement and tree protection details, dated February 2026

'Demonstration that there are sufficient services fulfilling the role previously held by Whitley Villa (Surgery)'

Queensgate Residential Commercial Advertisement Statement (Confidential)

The 'Rammurti Design Ltd', Design and Access Statement, dated 15 November 2025

The 'Heritage Revival', Heritage Statement, dated 14 December 2025

The 'Auric Acoustic Consulting', Acoustic Report, dated 19 November 2025

The 'Rammurti Design Ltd', Draft heads of terms s106 agreement for planning obligation, dated 9 February 2026

The 'Rammurti Design Ltd', schedule of works Version P5

Drawing No: CC01:301 – Block & Location Plans

Drawing No: CC01:305 Rev P1 – Proposed Elevations

Drawing No: CC01:306 Rev P1 – Proposed Site Layout

Drawing No: 0914 1.2 Planting Plan Rev A

Drawing No: CC01:303 Rev P2 – Proposed Floor Plans

Drawing No: CC01:302 Rev P2 – Existing Floor Plans
Drawing No: CC01:S1 – Existing Incoming Services
As received by the Local Planning Authority 23 February 2026

The 'Rammurti Design Ltd', schedule of works Version P6
Drawing No: CC01:D02 – Proposed Bin Store
Drawing No: CC01:D01 – Details – New window, studwork and front gate
As received by the Local Planning Authority 28 April 2026

Drawing No: CC01:D01 Rev P1 – Details – New Window, studwork and front gate
The Landscape Maintenance Plan
The 'Rammurti Design Ltd', schedule of works Version P7
Drawing No: 0914 1.1 Rev B – Hard Landscape Layout Plan
Drawing No: CC01:D03 – New wall and gate access to rear garden
As received by the Local Planning Authority 30 April 2026

3. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

RBC Conservation Officer

Original response raised limited objections, but required clarifications on a number of points/matters.

Final comments received, and confirmed that the proposal would be acceptable subject to conditions.

RBC Environmental Protection Officer

No objections, satisfied with noise assessment though query raised regarding mechanical ventilation acceptability for a listed building. Also, conditions recommended regarding contaminated land.

RBC Transport Development Control

No objection subject to conditions, and securing £3,500 towards a TRO.

RBC Natural Environment Officer

No objection, subject to conditions.

RBC Ecology

No objection.

RBC Waste Operations

No objection.

Conservation Area Advisory Committee & Reading Civic Society

No comments were received from CAAC or Reading Civic Society.

Thames Water

No objection, note that a build over agreement may be necessary.

NHS Integrated Care Board Berkshire Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire (ICB BOB)

No objection to the loss of the surgery.

A site notice was placed on each road frontage.



Four comments from residents were received. The matters raised are summarised below:

- Area needs more affordable housing;
- Surprise about lack of on-site parking, concern about lack of parking
- Querying doctors parking bays on Highgrove St;
- Query to seek to have the front and side remain acceptable within the conservation area
- Request to repair front porch
- Concern about loss of historic use as a doctors surgery
- Concern around flat conversions generally, and impact on mixed and sustainable communities, and overdevelopment of the site
- Concern about waste storage and collection, and management of waste
- Concern around cumulative impacts of development, and dilution of historic significance
- Objection to loss of family housing
- Harm to conservation area by converting the building to flats
- Existing residential amenity concerns (Noise, disturbance, wear on surrounding environment)
- Support for change of use of surgery to residential
- Lack of internal space within flats
- Concern around construction impacts on neighbouring uses

Officer Note: Disturbance from construction activities is not a material planning consideration. All other points are addressed below.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

PL/25/0623 - T2 Box Elder. Evenly reduce lateral spread by approximately 3m around the perimeter of the canopy back to suitable secondary branches. Crown clean to remove any deadwood. Approved 21 May 2025 (implemented)

PL/25/0622 - T1 Lime. Crown reduce/re-pollard back to previous 6m high pollard points, retaining a knuckle. Remove smaller stems at the 3.5m pollard point. Trim basal shoots. Approved 21 May 2025 (implemented)

030928 - Remove existing metal casement windows from ground and first floor bays. Replace outer two windows with fixed sepele hardwood sashes and centre with double spring loaded sashes. (Granted). 9 July 2003

970570 & 97/00309/LB - Reduce the lower ground floor slab (part) by 300mm to provide adequate headroom. (Granted). 30 September 1997

930264 & 93/00238/FD - To lay hardstanding for parking. (Granted). 3 June 1993

930254 & 93/00237/LB - Building works to form hardstanding within curtilage of listed building. (Granted). 3 June 1993

900492 & 90/00126/LB - Alterations including replacement railings, dwarf wall, new landscaping, and new pedestrian access to facilitate disabled visitors. (Granted). 21 March 1990

88/TP/0347 & 88/TP/0346 - Two storey brick/slate rear extension to existing doctor's surgery formation of parking spaces at rear. (Granted). 11 August 1988

80/TP/0203 - Change of use of first floor from residential to surgery for general medical practice. (Granted). 1 April 1980

5. EQUALITY ACT

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 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

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'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance
Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance, Historic England 2008
HEAG125 Listed Buildings and Curtilage
HEAG304 Listed Building Consent

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: PRESUMPTION IN FAVOUR OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
CC2: SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
CC3: ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE
CC5: WASTE MINIMISATION AND STORAGE
CC6: ACCESSIBILITY AND THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT
CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM
CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY
CC9: SECURING INFRASTRUCTURE
EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT
EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS
EN6: NEW DEVELOPMENT IN A HISTORIC CONTEXT
EN9: PROVISION OF OPEN SPACE
EN12: BIODIVERSITY AND THE GREEN NETWORK
EN14: TREES, WOODLAND AND HEDGES
EN15: AIR QUALITY
EN16: POLLUTION AND WATER RESOURCES
H1: PROVISION OF HOUSING
H2: DENSITY AND MIX
H3: AFFORDABLE HOUSING
H5: STANDARDS FOR NEW HOUSING
H8: RESIDENTIAL CONVERSIONS
H10: PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL OUTDOOR SPACE
TR1: ACHIEVING THE TRANSPORT STRATEGY
TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS
TR5: CAR AND CYCLE PARKING AND ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING
OU1: NEW AND EXISTING COMMUNITY FACILITIES

SPD

Affordable Housing SPD (2021)
Residential Conversions SPD (2023)
Planning Obligations Under Section 106 SPD (2015)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (2019)
Revised Parking Standards SPD (2011)

Other

Historic England Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets illustrates the application of policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent.

English Heritage's "Conservation Principles" provides policy and guidance for the "sustainable management of the historic environment".

Local Plan Update

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing

circumstances and national policy. A consultation version of the draft updated version of the Local Plan was published on 6th November 2024.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become “out of date” when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application is that they remain in accordance with national policy (aside from Policy H1, which is acknowledged to be out-of-date) and that the objectives of those policies remains very similar in the submission draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the determination of this planning application and are not considered to be ‘out of date’ (aside from Policy H1).

7. APPRAISAL

Loss of Community Use

The application site was last in use as a surgery. Policy OU1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) states that: *“Proposals involving the redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses will not be permitted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain that facility.”* Neighbours and the Clinical Commissioning Group have been consulted on the application. Further, as part of a pre-application enquiry by the applicant, officers contacted the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB). The response received on 10 March 2025 raised no objection to the proposal for the loss of the surgery. The BOB ICB also did not comment that they would seek mitigation for impacts on surgeries with the proposal for additional dwellings.

The applicant has also provided a supporting statement to demonstrate sufficiency of surgeries within the area, and demonstrated that the property has been advertised for let for ~7 months without interest. The statement outlines the number of facilities with a similar use class within a 1km radius of the site, including surgeries. It is noted, that in addition to the points put forward by the Applicant, that the closure of the GP surgery was subject of separate public consultation in 2024, though no details of the findings were provided.

The applicant has shown efforts to market the property, though it is not clear on what basis that marketing has occurred, or what rent/lease arrangements are met. It is clear that significant internal improvements would be required to the property to allow a prospective tenant to occupy the premises, which have not occurred at this time. The advertising of the property for seven months is notable, though lack of interest is potentially associated with the above mentioned concerns.

As above, it is clear that the property is in a poor state of repair, and may need extensive works to refurbish the building for its current use. No information on the works required appear to have been provided to demonstrate the cost prohibitive nature of said works, though the absence of interest is noted.

The Applicant has demonstrated that there are sufficient services fulfilling the role of the proposed service within the area. No separate public consultation activities by the Applicant have been undertaken. Through the publicity of the application (by way of site notices in line with statutory requirements), the LPA has received 4 comments from members of the public. One supported the change of use, 3 objected. This is not considered to be an overwhelming objection to the loss of the surgery, and would return the building to its historic residential use as discussed below (albeit as flats).

The building was converted around 46 years ago for surgery use and is not purpose-built. It is relatively small and does not provide good accessibility for all users, particularly to the first floor and basement.

Based on the above, it is considered in this particular instance that it has been demonstrated that there is no particular need to retain the community facility. The proposals are therefore in accordance with Policy OU1.

Heritage and Design Matters

The Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 provides a strong emphasis on conserving and enhancing heritage assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas. It is clear that the property has undergone significant change since its conversion to a surgery (1980), including the addition of a large rear extension (1988). These changes have significantly altered the building internally from its original use as a single residential dwelling.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment. Chapter 16 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' sets out the Government's high-level policies concerning heritage and sustainable development.

Paragraph 207 states, "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. " Paragraph 208 says, "Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF requires that 'when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation....' And paragraph 213 says, 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification'.

Paragraph 215 requires that 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal...'

Policy EN1 'Protection and enhancement of the historic environment' of the Reading Borough Local Plan sets out the Council's aspirations for the historic environment. The policy requires that all proposals to protect and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets and *their settings*, historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. It echoes the NPPF by stating, *"Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits"*.

Applications which affect *Listed Buildings* are expected not to have an adverse impact on the elements that contribute to their special architectural or historic interest, including their settings.

Policy EN3 'Enhancement of conservation areas' of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) requires that development proposals within Conservation Areas contribute positively to local character and distinctiveness. This policy further states ***"Positive consideration will be given to proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. These may include:***

- *Reducing visual clutter caused by negative factors, such as poles and overhead wires, satellite*

- dishes or unnecessary street furniture;*
- *Restoring original building features;*
- *Removing inappropriate additions or alterations to buildings;*
- *Protecting and encouraging the maintenance of green spaces and important trees, particularly where they are intrinsic to the history and character of the area;*
- *Improving signage and street furniture;*
- *Restoring or re-establishing appropriate paving, railings or walls;*
- *Sympathetic landscaping and planting;*
- *Improving or restoring green spaces, including front gardens, that are appropriate to the historic interest of a Conservation Area;*
- *Signage that reveals and promotes the Conservation Area and its boundaries;*
- *Interpretation panels to inform the public of the area's historical significance."*

Policy EN6 'New development in a historic context' also requires **"New development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development. When determining planning applications for new development, the following factors will be taken into consideration:**

- a) *The positive contribution of the development to the existing historic townscape (scale, height, mass, proportion, plot size, street form, materials, significant vistas and views, and open space);*
- b) *Sensitivity to historic context;*
- c) *Reflection of borough-wide major heritage themes that contribute to local distinctiveness (e.g. patterned brickwork or former worker terraced housing);*
- d) *Whether development promotes and/or improves access to previously undiscovered or neglected historic significance."*

Policy H1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, though out of date seeks to provide additional dwellings within the Borough. The NPPF supports re-use of 'brownfield sites' and the provision of housing on such sites.

Conversion to Residential

It is noted that the original use of the building was a single residential dwelling. Though, one objection states that the use is a historic surgery, that use would have been only a portion of the ~180 year life of the building so far. Heritage guidance also supports finding the 'optimal viable use' of heritage assets. Being, a use that is viable in the long-term which leads to investment and their long-term conservation of the heritage asset.

From a purist perspective, the use of the building as its original single residential dwelling would be the optimal conservation use of the building. However, the size of the dwelling is significant and therefore the use as a single dwelling in this location may not be the most attractive use within the market, and may not be the most efficient use of land. The use as flats, would be considered to be the optimal viable use of the building, with long term maintenance secured by individual ownership of the flats. As such, the conversion to flats would aid the long term conservation of the heritage asset, and assist the LPA in meeting the housing needs of the Borough, and as such is acceptable in principle.

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Works to Convert the Building

The application is a combined planning application and listed building consent application. The Applicant has provided a detailed schedule of works to support both applications to ensure the appropriateness of works to the listed building. The works generally are considered to be acceptable and do not harm the fabric of the listed building, or are undertaken sympathetically and in a way that is reversible.

Of note, the proposal does include excavation near the listed building, and lowering of the basement floor level to ensure acceptable head heights. These works will be undertaken by a sufficiently experienced person working with listed buildings and therefore is considered acceptable.

The works to the listed building, though substantial, to include refurbishment of a former surgery to become residential would need to upgrade the building to meet various building control requirements, and functional requirements are considered reasonable and are acceptable. Full details where not provided already will be secured by condition with the listed building consent approval.

External Design

The proposed development seeks to comprehensively consider the site and provide a light touch of external alterations. These include:

- Small extension of pathway to easter side for access to bicycle storage from front;
- Provision of a fence and gate to easter side front for bike storage (including bicycle shelter behind fence);
- Provision of a new basement access stairway between the original building and the rear extension (western side toward Highgrove street);
- Continuation/reinstatement of a boundary wall to the rear, to enclose the rear garden and bin storage area,
- Provision of a landscaped, shared garden area following taking up of hardstanding for parking and provision of a pave barbeque area
- Replacement of external doors as required with timber doors;
- Replacement of windows as required, or refurbishment and inclusion of trickle vents;
- Provision of mechanical ventilation extraction (and external vents) to kitchens/bathrooms;
- 5 no. new windows (and lightwells) to basement apartment

Overall, the external design of the development is considered appropriate, and would restore setting to the listed building, and enclose the rear garden in a historically respectful way. The works around the building, would impact the historic elements of the building, though predominantly to the rear or side, and therefore would have limited visibility from the conservation area. The lightwells and windows to the basement have been considered in locations, and at a scale to limit the impact on the appearance of the listed building, and wider conservation area.

Residential Amenity

Policy CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) states: *"Development will not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties or unacceptable living conditions for new residential properties, in terms of:*

- *Privacy and overlooking;*
- *Access to sunlight and daylight;*
- *Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;*
- *Harm to outlook;*
- *Noise and disturbance;*
- *Artificial lighting;*
- *Vibration;*
- *Dust and fumes;*
- *Smell;*
- *Crime and safety..."*

Policy H5 seeks to ensure all development provides sufficient internal space for future residents.

Policy H8 seeks to ensure that proposals to convert buildigns to self-contained flats are acceptable with regard to:

- The proposal respects the physical character of the area in terms of scale, location, materials and design, the arrangement of doors, windows and other principal architectural features;
- The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant loss of single family housing;
- There are no unacceptable adverse impacts to residents of the scheme or surrounding properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties;
- There is no inappropriate stacking and location of rooms between units;
- Bin and cycle storage is of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access; and
- The resulting property or properties would provide adequate internal floorspace and headroom⁸⁶ for residents. (the SPD refers to 2.3m floor to ceiling height).

Policy H10 states: *“Dwellings will be provided with functional private or communal open space, including green space wherever possible, that allows for suitable sitting-out areas, children’s play areas, home food production, green waste composting, refuse storage, general outdoor storage and drying space. Houses will be provided with private outdoor space whereas flats may be provided with communal outdoor space, balconies and/or roof gardens. The design of outdoor areas will respect the size and character of other similar spaces in the vicinity, clearly identify whether they are private or communal spaces, ensure that they are appropriately related to main entrances, enhance safety and the perception of safety for future residents and the general public, and not be compromised by the relationship of other buildings which may be detrimental in terms of overlooking, overbearing or overshadowing.”*

Amenity of Future Occupants

The proposed development would provide one flat on each floor, with three bed flats on ground and first floor, and a two bed flat within the basement. Each flat would exceed the nationally described space standards as outlined within policy H5. In addition, each bedroom would meet the space requirements within policy H5.

With regard to floor to ceiling height, the proposal would provide ground and first floor with >2.3m internal floor to ceiling height. Within the basement, the existing lowered floor area is between 2.23m and 1.8m, the majority is at 2.23m. The entire floor level will be lowered to 2.23m. This is less than the 2.3m sought, though only by 7cm. It is not considered, that due to the listed building status, that lowering the entire floor levels (that have previously been lowered) further would be reasonable to meet 2.3m, and a slight reduced head height is not considered so harmful as to be a reason for refusal in this instance.

With regard to stacking of rooms, the ground and first floor layout are identical, with bedrooms above bedrooms, living room, kitchen, and bathroom above each other room. Between basement and ground floor, the layout differs. At basement level, the living room and kitchen/dining area is located to the western end to allow greater daylight and sunlight as well as outlook to these rooms (through new windows). To the eastern side are the two bedrooms, below the kitchen and living area of the flat above, this is suboptimal in its arrangement. This is a poor level of stacking, though, based on the alternative arrangement that would impact more of the listed building, it is not considered that an alternative arrangement could be pursued, and would not form a sole reason for refusal. The noise between residential properties may result in some disturbance for residents below. Though details to mitigate this are contained within the schedule of works accompanying the listed building consent. Building Regulations also require sound insulation between properties, and this would be sufficient to protect residential amenity in this instance, and would be identified as an informative.

With regard to access to daylight and sunlight and outlook, the ground and first floor dwellings are provided with good sized windows and sufficient outlook and daylight/sunlight. To the basement, the flat is provided with multiple new window openings, and use of an existing door as a window opening. The basement flat provides dual aspect to the living room, and windows to each bedroom. These new openings would be higher level. Though, due to the orientation, and layout would provide a reasonable outlook from the basement flat. Due to the number of windows to the open plan living/dining/kitchen space, it is considered that there would be suitable daylight/sunlight to these areas.

The proposal includes the provision of a shared garden space for the development to the rear of the site, and a small private garden are to the west of the site for sole use of the basement flat. As per policy H10, flats may be provided with communal open space. In addition, the site is located in close proximity to Cintra Park (~500m away). The proposal is considered to provide sufficient outdoor space for the needs of the development.

With regard to privacy of occupants. It is possible that the location of the bike store, and use of the open space may impact the privacy for future occupants. However, it is unlikely that other residents would linger in the bike store, nor would the more narrow piece of communal garden be likely to be used as frequently as the rear open portion, or paved barbeque area. As such, privacy is not considered to be a concern for future occupants.

With regard to existing residents. The proposal would use existing openings at ground and first floor, and therefore would not result in additional opportunities for overlooking, though the use would be different in terms of activity at times of day. The side (east) facing ground and first floor windows would also serve bedrooms, and are secondary windows. As such, it is unlikely that future residents would look over neighbouring dwellings or their gardens for concern over view into their bedrooms.

In terms of noise and disturbance, the use of the dwelling as three flats would result in a material decrease in activity at peak times, and potentially increase use outside of business hours. However, as the development is residential in nature, this would be common and consistent with surrounding uses and would not be considered to harm existing residential amenity.

Transport matters

Policies TR1, TR3, and TR5 seek to ensure that development does not have a detrimental effect on highways safety and provides suitable car or cycle parking. The Revised Parking Standards SPD states that within this zone (zone 2), the development should provide 4 parking spaces. The proposal, has not provided any parking on site. Due to the location of the development in reasonable walking distance to the town centre, the parking restrictions within the area to restrict overflow parking, and the number of bus routes which frequently pass near the site, a car free development is considered acceptable in this instance. In addition, given the benefits to the listed building of returning the garden to green space, providing of parking would conflict with the heritage aims.

The proposed development would also provide suitable covered, and secure bicycle parking for all flats to encourage cycling.

It is noted that the site has in the past been provided with a doctors parking bay on Highgrove Street. A contribution, secured through s106 would be required to adjust the doctors' parking bay to normal use (not specifically allocated to the site).

Affordable Housing

Affordable Housing is a priority for the Council, reflecting the critical need that exists in the Borough.

Reading Borough Council's adopted Local Plan (2019) requires all development to: *"Residential development will make appropriate contribution towards affordable housing to meet the needs of Reading ... on sites of 5 – 9 dwellings, a financial contribution will be made that will enable the equivalent of 20% of the housing to be provided as affordable housing elsewhere in the Borough ... In all cases where proposals fall short of the policy target as a result of viability considerations, an open-book approach will be taken and the onus will be on the developer/landowner to clearly demonstrate the circumstances justifying a lower affordable housing contribution."*

The application was supported by valuations, and a heads of terms agreeing to make a policy compliant contribution toward off-site affordable housing equating to £39,350.00. This will be secured by a bilateral legal agreement pursuant to s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Sustainability

The proposal is for the conversion of a non-residential use to residential. In accordance with policy CC2 requires all minor (less than 10 dwelling) conversions, to meet a BREEAM 'Very Good' standard. The sustainable design and construction SPD outlines allowance for listed buildings to be flexible, as meeting the standard may result in unacceptable impacts on the listed building. The applicant was encouraged to provide a pre-assessment indicator up front to confirm what BREEAM standard could be met. The provided pre-assessment indicator has shown that the scheme can meet Very Good, including a healthy buffer to ensure that where credits are lost, that the Very Good rating can be maintained. A condition is recommended to secure final BREEAM certification to 'Very Good' requirements.

CIL

The proposed development would be CIL liable as it would create new dwellings. The existing surgery has been in use for at least 6 months of the preceding three years, having closed in January 2025. As such, the liability on the development would be offset by the existing use.

Contaminated land

The application site is located on identified contaminated land. A contaminated land assessment has been submitted. The finding identifies that additional works to remediate may be required, as such conditions relating to contaminated land are recommended.

Ecology

It is noted that biodiversity net gain is mandatory, except for certain exemptions. The applicant has demonstrated that the development would meet the di minimus exemption. Policy EN12 seeks to provide biodiversity net gain wherever possible. The landscaping around the site would provide additional planting and green space resulting in a net gain on site, and is therefore acceptable.

Trees

The application site is subject of two tree preservation orders (TPO) for trees at the frontage. These have recently been granted tree works approval for re-pollarding and canopy reduction respectively. The proposal includes some ground work in close proximity to these trees (lightwell installation only). The applicant has provided sufficient information to demonstrate that there would be no harm to the trees subject to implementation of tree protection measures.

The proposed landscaping scheme is also acceptable in principle, and full details are recommended to be secured by condition.

8. CONCLUSION

The loss of the GP surgery has been demonstrated as acceptable. The proposal would bring the listed building back into use, though a conversion to a single dwelling would most likely represent its optimal viable use, the conversion is considered to be acceptable in principle. There are shortcomings of the design and layout of the basement flat, predominantly with regard to stacking, though the layout maximises outlook and daylight and sunlight. In addition, the head height within the basement is suboptimal. However, these issues are not considered to be so harmful to warrant refusal, and on balance the proposal would be the best opportunity for the listed building to be brought back into use. The scheme would also provide benefits to the listed building, and conservation area through thoughtful layout of external works, and repair of historic fabric. As such, the proposal is recommended for approval.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Approve.