

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT CULTURE & SPORT  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 09/01/19

ITEM NO. 11

**Ward:** Katesgrove  
**App No:** 181855/REG3  
**Address:** 125 Basingstoke Road  
**Proposal:** Conversion of redundant storage area to create a three bedroom flat  
**Applicant:** Reading Borough Council  
**Date validated:** 29/10/18  
**Target Date:** 24/12/18  
**Extension:** 11/01/19

### RECOMMENDATION

#### GRANT

Conditions to include:

##### Standard

1. Time limit for implementation
2. Use of materials
3. Approved plans
4. Bicycle parking provided in accordance with the approved plans

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and conditions
2. Need for building regulations
3. Encroachment
4. Construction and Demolition subject to Environmental Health
5. Positive and proactive

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 125 Basingstoke Road is a four storey, Reading Borough Council owned, block of flats located opposite the junction with Craddock Road. The building is formed in an L-shape and comprises 49 flats. Parking courts are located to the front and rear of the building. Adjacent to Basingstoke Road is an area of amenity space, including a children's playground. The surrounding area comprises a mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- 1.2 The area subject of this application is located at the ground floor to the northeast corner of the building. This area comprises redundant storage, which has been vacant for a number of years.



Site Location

## 2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the conversion of a redundant storage area to a three bedroom flat. To facilitate the conversion, six additional windows would be located to the northward and eastward elevations at the ground floor. The proposed fenestration is of the same style and design as the existing, positioned to line through vertically and horizontally with that above and aside.
- 2.2 An internal reconfiguration of the space would provide three double bedrooms, a kitchen, bathroom and lounge area. The flat would benefit from an independent access lobby. The flat would have an internal floor space of 100 square metres. Each habitable room would benefit from an external window.
- 2.3 To the front of the building would be located a secure, covered bicycle store for the use of future occupants of the flat.

## 3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 980441/REG3 - Construction of three bathroom tower extensions to provide facilities for self-contained bedsits - Permitted 01/05/98

## 4. CONSULTATIONS

### (i) Statutory Consultation

4.1 None.

### (ii) Non Statutory Consultation

#### 4.2 Transport Development Control

4.3 The application site comprises a redundant storage area situated on the ground floor of an existing apartment building at 125 Basingstoke Road. The proposal is to convert the redundant storage area into a three bedroom flat.

4.4 The site is in a highly sustainable location with strong public transport links. A number of regular bus services operate along Basingstoke Road connecting the area with Reading town centre. Bus stops are located 150m to the north and south on Basingstoke Road.

4.5 The Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD outlines the required parking provision for various uses in support of Policy CS24 of the Core Strategy. The site is located within Zone 2, where the required parking provision for a three bedroom apartment is 1.5 spaces per unit.

4.6 No new parking spaces form part of this proposal. The Design and Access Statement advises that the proposed tenants are unlikely to own private motor vehicles and thus it is not expected that there will be a significant change in the demand for parking spaces within the existing complex.

4.7 The Council's adopted standard states that a lower provision is acceptable if the site is within a sustainable location, and providing a lower provision of parking will not lead to highway safety issues as a result. Accordingly, a survey of the existing car parking conditions in the vicinity of the site accompanies this application.

4.8 Vehicular access into the site and parking area is taken from B3031 Basingstoke Road. Basingstoke Road is covered by double yellow lines (no parking at any time) and a peak hour loading ban between 08:15 to 09:15 and 16:00 to 18:15. Therefore, any parking overspill on the classified road can be appropriately managed and controlled.

4.9 The car parking surveys indicate that there is some spare capacity on the unrestricted roads in the surrounding residential area. Therefore, the additional demand for parking from the proposed three bedroom flat is unlikely to result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

4.10 It is unclear whether the existing storage area provides any cycle storage. The proposal includes the provision of cycle storage lockers near the parking area at the front of the site, although the number of lockers will not accommodate the whole site. The proposed arrangements are acceptable providing that there is not a loss of facilities for the existing residents.

4.11 The proposed apartment will share bin storage facilities with the existing residents which is acceptable.

4.12 In view of the above, there are no transport objections to the proposal, subject to a condition requiring that bicycle storage be provided in accordance with the approved plans.

4.13 Neighbour consultation

4.14 Neighbouring owners and occupiers at 103, 123 and 169 Basingstoke Road and 58-70 (evens) Home Farm Close were consulted by letter. Two site notices were displayed. No letters of representation were received.

## 5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'.

5.2 The application has been assessed against the following policies:

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework

5.4 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008) (altered 2015)

Policy CS4: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

Policy CS5: Inclusive Access

Policy CS7: Design and the Public Realm

Policy CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities

Policy CS14: Provision of Housing

Policy CS15: Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix

Policy CS18: Residential Conversions

Policy CS20: Implementation of The Reading Transport Strategy

Policy CS22: Transport Assessments

Policy CS24: Car/Cycle Parking

5.5 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) (altered 2015)

Policy SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy DM4: Safeguarding Amenity

Policy DM5: Housing Mix

Policy DM6: Affordable Housing

Policy DM8: Residential Conversions

Policy DM9: House Extensions and Ancillary Accommodation

Policy DM10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

Policy DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

5.6 Reading Borough Proposals Map

5.7 Revised Parking Standards and Design Supplementary Planning Document (2011)

5.8 Supplementary Planning Guidance - A Design Guide to House Extensions (2003)

5.9 Supplementary Planning Document - Residential Conversions (2013)

## **6. APPRAISAL**

### **(i) Principle of development**

6.1 The proposed conversion would increase the available housing stock in the Borough, contributing towards an identified need. In addition, Policy DM8 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document requires that at least one unit of accommodation should be suitable for family accommodation, with a minimum of two bedrooms. The proposal accords with this. The proposed conversion would also put currently vacant space back into an active use. The principle of the proposed conversion is therefore acceptable, subject to the relevant material planning considerations below.

### **(ii) Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area**

6.2 The proposed conversion is facilitated within the footprint of the existing building. Only minor external alterations are proposed with the installation of six windows. The proposed fenestration is considered appropriate in terms of style and positioning would not detract from the appearance of the building, nor the character of the surrounding area. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy.

### **(iii) Amenity of future occupiers**

6.3 The proposed flat would have an independent access, with entry achieved into a private hallway. Adequate ventilation and daylight is available to all rooms, and all habitable rooms would benefit from an external window. Internal floor space standards are achieved by all rooms. Adequate sound proofing could be satisfactorily achieved under the relevant Environmental Health legislation. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy DM8 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document and the Residential Conversions Supplementary Planning Document.

6.4 Occupants of the flat would have use of the existing communal outdoor amenity space, adjacent to Basingstoke Road. This is considered acceptable and is in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

### **(iv) Impact on neighbouring amenities**

6.5 Neither the conversion of the redundant storage area, nor the minor elevational alterations are considered to cause harm to the amenity of neighbouring owners and occupiers. Any noise issues that might arise as a result of the conversion could be reasonably controlled by separate Environmental Health legislation. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy DM4 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

### **(v) Transport**

6.6 The site is located within Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Council's adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. Typically this zone is well served by public transport, with buses continuing either into or out of the Central Core Area via this zone. A three bedroom flat in this location would require the provision of 1.5 off-road parking spaces. However, no additional parking has been proposed. As per the Council's standard, a lower provision will

only be acceptable if the site is within a sustainable location and no adverse highway safety issues would result.

- 6.7 As per the parking survey supplied with the application, and the consultation response from Transport Development Control, it is considered unlikely that the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
- 6.8 A secure bicycle store is proposed to the front of the building, for the use of future occupiers of the flat. The existing bin storage would be shared with future occupiers of the flat. Both of these are considered appropriate in the context of this application. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy CS24 of the Core Strategy and Policies DM8 and DM12 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document.

**(vi) Affordable housing**

- 6.9 West Berkshire District Council and Reading Borough Council applied for a judicial review of the Secretary of State's Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) to Parliament in 2014 on changes to national planning policy. Those changes sought to exempt developments of 10 or less dwellings from planning obligations for affordable housing and social infrastructure contributions and to introduce a new measure known as the Vacant Building Credit.
- 6.10 The High Court handed down its judgment on the case on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015. The High Court found in favour of the challenge by the local authorities and quashed the amendments to the NPPG. The Secretary of State appealed the judgment and the Court of Appeal has now quashed the decision of the High Court.
- 6.11 At its meeting of the Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016, the Council discussed the outcome of the Court of Appeal's decision on its challenge (the report can be found here: [http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5651/Item09-SEPT-C-Report-on-C-of-Appeal-judgement-05-16/pdf/Item09\\_SEPT\\_C\\_Report\\_on\\_C\\_of\\_Appeal\\_judgement\\_05\\_16.pdf](http://www.reading.gov.uk/media/5651/Item09-SEPT-C-Report-on-C-of-Appeal-judgement-05-16/pdf/Item09_SEPT_C_Report_on_C_of_Appeal_judgement_05_16.pdf)).
- 6.12 The Committee agreed the following as the basis for determining planning applications where Policy DM6 of the SDPD is relevant:  
*To implement Policy DM6 as currently adopted in the SDPD but excluding proposals that solely involve the conversion of an existing property, where the conversion involves the provision of 10 or less dwelling units (i.e. not HMOs), or the replacement of dwellings by the same number of replacement dwellings where there is no net increase.*
- 6.13 The proposal is for conversion of existing building and therefore on the basis of the above amendment to Policy DM6 the proposal is not considered to require an affordable housing contribution.

**(vii) Equality**

- 6.14 In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. 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 the particular planning application. In terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

**7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposed development is considered acceptable in the context of national and local planning policy, as set out in this report. The application is recommended for approval on this basis.

**8. PLANS**

Document Ref: P17-2367 - Design and Access Statement (received 22/11/18)  
Drawing No: 16/037/07 Rev. A - Block Plan, Proposed Ground Floor Plan and Elevations (received 29/10/18)  
Parking Stress Survey Report, by Alpha Parking Ltd (received 25/10/18)

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

