

UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 5 February 2020

ITEM NO. 10

Ward: Katesgrove

App No: 191043/FUL

Address: 43 London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

Proposal: Part-demolition of existing London Street facade and internal works to building alongside demolition of two storey building to rear to enable residential-led mixed-use.

RECOMMENDATION:

Grant, as per the main agenda report with the following:

Amended condition:

3. Dwelling and use restriction

Additional condition:

40. Full details of shopfront on London Street

This update paper consists of the following matters:

1. Consultations
2. Conditions
3. Approved Plans
4. Community Infrastructure Levy

1 CONSULTATIONS

- 1.1 Since the publication of the committee agenda, the Council has received revised comments from the **Reading Conservation Area Advisory Panel (CAAC)** and the **Reading Civic Society**. These comments follow further engagement work and an accompanied site visit with the developer on the 28th January 2020. The content of both these Non-Statutory Consultees is included below in their entirety.

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Panel

- 1.2 In summary, the Reading CAAC consider this a positive development on the site and support the proposal for the reasons given below.

“We have now met the Owner’s Agent three times, and the developer twice, about planned changes to this deep and complex site, most recently on 28 January 2020.

Our comments on 17 September 2019.

Our submission on 17th September 2019 supported the proposed development overall as we thought it was a creative design on a difficult, and overall uninspiring, space and part of a car park.

Our only concerns related to understanding the changes which were planned to the front of the building (on London Street) and the impact of inserting a third floor (which we understood were to provide additional accommodation). We were also uncertain whether any historic elements, referred to in the D Sherborn publication (1958), remained.

Update 28 January 2020

On 28 January we had the opportunity to see the interior of the property and have reviewed the new plans submitted in January. We are grateful to the developer and his agent for organising this and accompanying us on the visit.

1. GENERAL

1.1 The new plans improve on an originally creative proposal for the south side of Sims Court. We noted that they had however have had to be adjusted, to some degree, as a result of some negative incremental changes in the Sims Court development.

1.2 The opportunity to visit the site visit has enabled us to gain a greater understanding of the historic building, any remaining historic elements, the proposed design and the overall benefits of the development.

1.3 The ground floor frontage on London Street is already much altered; the angular “bow” window is not historic, nor is the set back wall, the window to the first floor is also not original.

1.4. The Planning Application proposes dispense with the ground floor window and bring forward the front of the property so that it aligns with neighbouring properties and the existing first floor. We understand why the developer wishes to bring the line of the property forward and support this.

1.5 Having been into the space at the front on the first floor we can understand that by the addition of a further floor (flat 3) and then the top floor duplex (flat 4), which will be stepped back from the building line and be “green”, it will be possible to create some good spaces. Even during busy evening traffic, with buses waiting outside and traffic passing, we did not find the front room on the first floor noisy. The increased height of the building will not be visible from the pavement next to the property. Providing appropriate bricks and mortar are used we feel it will be fairly discreet from the opposite side. The additional height required to create the duplex (Flat 4) is we feel acceptable as it looks to be a good living space and it will also enable the “affordable housing” commitments to be managed by the developer.

1.6 The original brick wall to the first floor and the parapet are heavily, and poorly painted white. The brick parapet is not original, the plan is for a new window opening created in it, and for it to be increased in height. We do have significant doubts that this existing brickwork will be suitable for conservation (removal of paintwork, replacing bricks, repointing) and how well the additional brick work will match, and indeed how stable the existing brick parapet will prove to be once work starts.

1.7 Recognising the very limited historic fabric in the building as it fronts onto London Street, its condition, and the changes which will need to be

made to implement the proposed design then it may be preferable to consider replacing the whole of the front wall so that the look is consistent. Indeed it may be preferable to consider examining this part of the development as all as a new build.

1.8 Should this approach be considered we feel that the overall benefits of the proposed development will outweigh the loss of the limited remains of the front wall of the two-storey property left behind by the Victorian developments on either side and also that a more radical approach (all new build) could be justified.

2. HERITAGE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY

2.1 Our visit on 28 January allowed us to look for the features mentioned in 1958 by Derek S Sherborn in 'Buildings of Architectural Merit in Reading' and satisfy our curiosity as to their continued existence or not.

"House now shop of early C17 with a simple queen post roof. The back walls are of brickwork perhaps of C18. The front downstairs room is panelled to the ceiling with early C18 panelling with staircase of this period. The back room has, inserted upside down in a window of C1820, an inscribed pane of glass with the following lines scratched with a diamond;

"Eliz Lucas, March 3 1745.

*Thus oft dull wits their nonsense write
And make the beams of blushing light,
reveal the deeds that shame the night"*

Upstairs in an early C17 panelled door with two pairs of coxhead hinges."

2.2 There is panelling in the ground floor room south side (front room) which is probably the panelling Derek Sherborn refers to. Whilst it is not easy to age it may be worthy of restoration and re-use in the commercial unit proposed on the ground floor.

2.3 The staircase looks modern and all the windows that were visible looked modern.

2.4 We did find a panelled door with two pairs of coxhead hinges leading to the room on the first floor. This was very solid as was the doorframe surrounding it. It would be worthy of restoration and re-use to retain a link with the heritage of the site.

2.5 It may be that the remnant of the window has been covered over. We would ask that during re-development work a watch is kept out for this, if discovered consideration be given to its incorporation in some way.



2.6 The property has in the past been a pub, The Eagle Tavern, and was also for many years the studio of Lorraine Ward, photographer. There is an image in the Reading Library collection c1904 from this time when the property still had a pitched roof (BRN 462205). The pitched roof is evident on the first floor and this will be lost in the development.

2.7 The property does not appear to have a basement.

3. MATERIALS

3.1 We note that the RBC conservation officer has requested samples of materials and drawings for the windows and shopfront. This will ensure that appropriate and good quality materials are used that will enhance the conservation area.

3.2 We would like to add to this that as much as possible of the original brickwork (or bricks) and other materials are re-used in the remodelling of

No 43. This should include finding a home for the panelled door and the panelling.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 Reading CAAC now has clarity on some of the heritage features within the building.

4.2 This is a positive development for the site and the proposal is supported.

4.2 Given that very little of the historic fabric remains of building as it faces London Street we feel that overall the benefits of the proposals will outweigh; the replacement of all of the front wall in total (should this be appropriate) and even the total loss of a two storey property left behind by the Victorian developments on either side.

Yours sincerely

Evelyn Williams
Chair Reading CAAC
On behalf of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee”

Reading Civic Society

- 1.3 Reading Civic Society have now commented and support the proposal. There comment are as follows:

“I did not make a Civic Society Comment on the plans which were submitted for the above Planning Application in September 2019.

At an early stage in the development of proposals for the site members of the Civic Society Planning Sub Committee took the opportunity to have an extensive discussion with the Developer, his agent and other members of his team, about the initial design proposals for this site. We were able to walk the accessible parts of the site to gain an understanding of the design proposals and the challenges.

We were impressed with the design, taking the view that they were very creative for what is a very difficult site. We did not have concerns about the proposed height of the building as it faced London Street. We did have some concerns about the historic building as we did not know what historic elements remained, but we were doubtful that they would prove to be significant.

The proposals have now been amended, and enhanced, following further discussions with Planning Officers and the Architects Panel.

Members of the RCS Planning Sub Committee recently met the Agent for the site who updated us on the revised proposals and rational and the deliverables.

It was agreed that Reading Civic Society supports this proposed development. We note the Heritage Consultant’s reports and his comments in the Discussion Section of his report, and we support his proposals re conditions.

On 28th January I had the opportunity to undertake a site visit along with the Chair of the CAAC. This enabled us to examine the historic remnants of 43 London St. They appear to be confined to panelling and a door/ hinges and doorframe. In the circumstances we perhaps take a more radical view than the Heritage Consultant. The remaining facade is relatively small, the

window is not original, and even if the paintwork is stripped off that is not always very successful in its visual impact. Additionally, the existing pediment will probably not be stable enough to be extended upwards have a window inserted and will probably have to be replaced. In which case very little of the original façade will remain. In the circumstances a total rebuild of the façade may deliver a far better effect and if historic bricks are used the historic ethos would not be lost. I can also see, and support, the point made by the Chair of the CAAC that a more extreme approach, regarding 43 as a New Build, could also be appropriate providing original bricks and materials are recycled.

Best wishes

Richard

Richard Bennett DL
Chair Reading Civic Society”

2 CONDITIONS

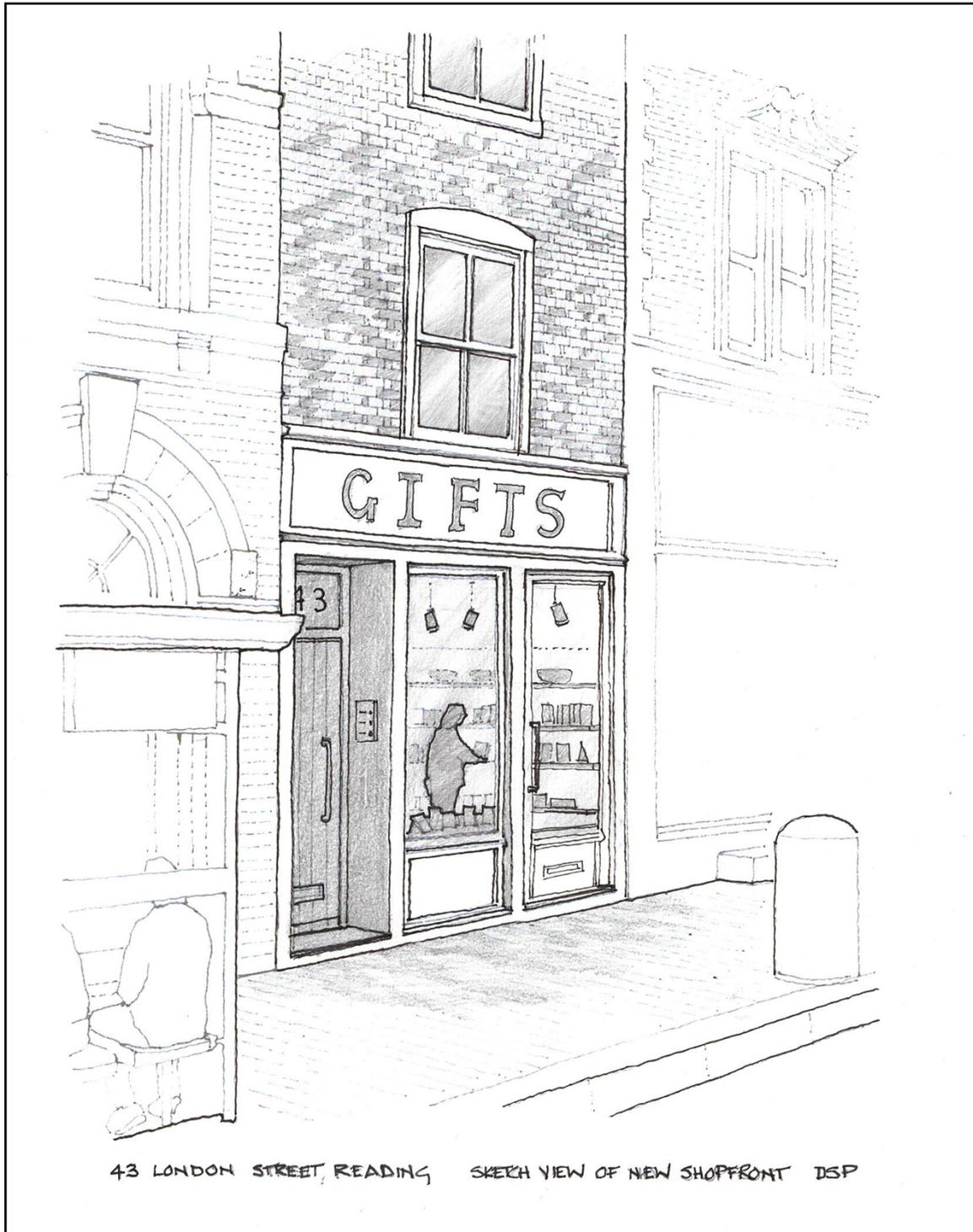
2.1 In order to ensure that the 48sqm of D1 use at ground floor within 43 London Street remains available for such purposes, it is considered necessary and reasonable to include reference this non-residential part of the scheme within Condition 3 ‘Dwelling mix restriction’. This condition will be renamed ‘Dwelling and use restriction’ and reworded to ensure that both the dwelling mix and non-residential use hereby approved cannot alter without express consent of the LPA.

2.2 In light of the above consultation responses from the CAAC and RCS and in order to ensure that any frontage treatment onto London Street remains appropriate to its historic context, agreement has been reached with the developer to add a condition requiring the submission of frontage details prior to commencement of development. For clarification this condition will be worded as such:

40. *Notwithstanding the shopfront details and new entrance to the D1 unit hereby submitted, no development shall commence on site until detailed plans at a minimum scale of 1:20 of the ground floor shopfront and entrance onto London Street have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include window frames, stall risers, fascia and mullions along with material and finish details. Thereafter, the shopfront and new entrance to the D1 unit shall be implemented fully in accordance with these approved details prior to first occupation of the development hereby approved.*

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and ensuring the new development responds positively to the local context and character in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

2.3 In order to assist Members in visualising the style of the traditional shopfront based on the information contained within the submitted plans, Officers have secured the following artist impression for the Committee. This shows how delineation can be achieved between any non-residential use and the residential entrance, whilst providing scope for traditional materiality:



43 LONDON STREET, READING SKETCH VIEW OF NEW SHOPFRONT DSP

3 APPROVED PLANS

3.1 The following plans have been considered as part of this application:

DRAWING REGISTER – 43&43a London Street, Reading											
dsp architectural	DAY	24	06	05							
	MONTH	06	12	01							
	YEAR	19	19	20							
TITLE	No.	REVISIONS									
Location Plan	LSR 000	P1	P1								
Site Plan	LSR 001	P1	P1								
Existing Block Plan	LSR 002	P1	P1								
Proposed Block Plan	LSR 003	P1	P1								
Topographic Survey	LS2140/T/01	A	A								
Ground Floor Plan	LS2140/G/01	A	A								
First Floor Plan	LS2140/L/01	A	A								
Second Floor Plan	LS2140/2/01	A	A								
Site Sections/Elevations, Elevation A	LS2140/E/01	A	A								
Site Sections/Elevations, Elevation B	LS2140/E/02	A	A								
Site Sections/Elevations, Elevations C&D	LS2140/E/03	A	A								
Site Sections/Elevations, Elevations E&F	LS2140/E/04	A	A								
Site Sections/Elevations, Elevations G,H&I	LS2140/E/05	A	A								
Lower Ground Floor Layout	LSR 011	P3	P1	P2	P3						
Upper Ground Floor Layout	LSR 012	P3	P1	P2	P3						
First Floor Layout	LSR 013	P3	P1	P2	P3						
Second Floor Layout	LSR 014	P3	P1	P2	P3						
Third Floor Layout	LSR 015	P3	P1	P2	P3						
Fourth Floor Layout	LSR 016	P3	P1	P2	P3						
Roof Layout	LSR 017	P3		P2	P3						
Proposed Street Elevation	LSR 020	P1	P1	P1	P1						
Proposed Cross Section AA	LSR 030	P1	P1	P1	P1						
Proposed Cross Section BB	LSR 031	P3	P1	P2	P3						
Proposed Cross Section CC	LSR 032	P3	P1	P2	P3						
Proposed Cross Section DD	LSR 033	P3	P1	P2	P3						
Proposed Cross Section EE	LSR 034	P1	P1	P1	P1						
Proposed Long Section FF & GG	LSR 035	P3	P1	P2	P3						
Proposed Long Section HH	LSR 036	P3	P1	P2	P3						

Daylight and Sunlight Report ref: P1965, dated June 2019
 Internal Daylight and Sunlight Report dated June 2019
 Daylight and Sunlight Amenity Update Note dated January 2020
 Energy Statement ref: P19528.RP001.A, dated June 2019
 Financial Viability Appraisal and Appendices dated June 2019
 Heritage Statement, ref: 1986.6.1, dated June 2019
 Noise Statement, ref: 1922217, dated June 2019
 Phase I Environmental Risk Assessment and Appendices, ref: 19-195.01, dated June 2019
 Sustainability Statement and BREEM Predictive Assessments, dated June 2019
 Transport Statement, ref: 18002, dated June 2019
 Utility Status Report and Appendices, ref: 190470-P1, dated June 2019

4 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

4.1 In terms of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) liability the total floor area of the development is calculated as approximately 1,338sqm. Based on the indexed CIL rate for residential part of this development, this equates to a liability of £202,757.

Case Officer: Brian Conlon