

## COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND REGULATORY SERVICES  
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Ward: Katesgrove

App No.: 200716/REG3

Address: Blocks 1 & 2, Aveley Walk, Reading

Proposal: Conversion of existing ground floor stores in 1 & 2 Aveley Walk to form a 1 bedroom dwelling in each block.

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Deadline: 25<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and an extension of time has been agreed to 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### RECOMMENDATION:

Delegate to Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services to (i) GRANT full planning permission subject to completion of a Unilateral Undertaking or (ii) to REFUSE permission should the Unilateral Undertaking not be completed by the 28th October 2020 (unless the planning officer, on behalf of the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services agrees to a later date for completion of the legal agreement). The legal agreement is to secure the provision of the two proposed dwellings as affordable rental homes.

### Conditions to include:

- 1) TL1 - Standard time limit 3 yrs.
- 2) AP1 - Approved plans.
- 3) M1 - Materials (brickwork to match existing and windows to be triple glazed)
- 4) To be used for affordable housing purposes only
- 5) DC20 - Parking permits 1
- 6) DC21 - Parking permits 2
- 7) C1 - Hours of construction/demolition
- 8) C4 - No bonfires

### Informatives to include:

- 1) IF1 - Positive & Proactive
- 2) IF5 - Terms and Conditions
- 3) IF6 - Building Control
- 4) IF7 - Complaints about construction
- 5) I10 - Noise between residential properties
- 6) I11 - CIL not chargeable
- 7) I13 - Parking Permits

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Aveley Walk consists of three blocks of flats located to the north east of Nimrod Way and accessed via Elgar Road South/Waterloo Road. This application relates to Blocks 1 and 2 only. Block 1 consists of 12 dwellings and Block 2 10 dwellings. On the ground floor of each block adjacent to

the entrance door is a storage area. The storage areas in Blocks 1 and 2 have been redundant for some time and have sustained fire damage in the past.

- 1.1.1 Block 3 received prior approval on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 for the conversion of the existing community office unit to a one bedroom flat with an internal floor area of 39sqm. This conversion appears to have been implemented.

### Site Location Plan



## 2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is for the conversion of two ground floor stores (one store in Block 1 and one store in Block 2) to create 2 x 1 bedroom dwellings. Both stores have previously been fire damaged and are redundant. The dwellings will provide a kitchen, bathroom, living and dining room and bedroom. The dwellings would have an internal floor area of 45sqm.
  - 2.1.1 The entrance to the flats will be provided via an existing secure entry door that opens into the lobby with a front entrance door to the proposed dwellings being cut into the brickwork.
  - 2.1.2 External alterations include the replacement of the store doors with a kitchen window and new windows for the bedroom and dining room.
  - 2.1.3 Bin storage will be provided through existing arrangements which includes a bin storage compound at each block and informal/unallocated parking is located around the blocks.

## 3. SUBMITTED PLANS AND DOCUMENTS:

#### 4. PLANNING HISTORY

92/00959/REG3 (Civica Ref: 920517) - Flat to pitched roof conversion to three blocks of flats. Permitted 11/02/1993.

02/00009/REG3 (Civica Ref: 021232) - Change of use of existing pram stores into community office. Permitted 06/03/2002.

181943/OPA (Block 3 Aveley Walk) - Change of use of ground floor from Class B1(a) (offices) to C3 (dwelling houses) to comprise of 1 x 1 bedroom flat. Prior Notification under Class O, Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior Approval Not Required 03/01/2019.

#### 5. CONSULTATIONS

##### 5.1 Statutory

None.

##### 5.2 Non-statutory

###### Development Control Transport

The site is located in Zone 2, Primary Core Area, of the Revised Parking Standards and Design SPD. This zone directly surrounds the Central Core Area and extends to walking distances of 2 kilometres from the centre of Reading. The site is in a highly sustainable location with strong public transport links connecting the site with Reading town Centre. The average car ownership for a 1 person flat within Katesgrove ward is in the region of 0.48 spaces per unit which is lower than adopted standards.

Aveley Walk is unadopted and is not maintained or managed by the Local Highway Authority. The Design and Access Statement states that there are a number of parking laybys around the blocks but it does not appear that any spaces are allocated to specific flats.

The Council's adopted standards 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. A review of the area confirms that the surrounding highway network has parking restrictions in place. Whilst there is no Resident's Permit Scheme in operation, there are 'No Waiting' restrictions on the junctions preventing on-street parking to maintain the visibility splays.

In view of this, there is no objection to this application on parking grounds given that the development would not result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety. However, the future occupants of the dwellings should be aware that they would not be eligible for any residents parking permits if a residents parking scheme comes forwards in the future.

In accordance with the adopted Parking SPD, the development is required to provide a minimum of 0.5 cycle parking spaces for each residential unit in a conveniently located, lockable, covered store. This should be covered by condition.

### Environmental Protection

Standing Advice states that for small residential conversions near noisy areas (Nimrod Way industrial estate) a noise assessment should be submitted with an application. As the proposed dwellings are in an existing residential block of flats a noise assessment is not considered necessary and the agent has confirmed that triple glazing will be installed in both dwellings (secure by condition). Environmental Protection officers were satisfied that this was adequate when dealing with the change of use of the community unit in Block 3 when the prior approval application was submitted.

### **5.3 Publicity**

A site notice was displayed at Block 1 and Block 2 Aveley Walk on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2020. One letter of objection has been received with regards to:

- The address is not Aveley Court, Aveley Walk (*Officer Note: this has now been amended to Aveley Walk only*);
- Putting flats into storage rooms is “like ramming an extra biscuit into an already overfilled biscuit tin” the area is already overcrowded;
- The drains do not have the capacity to take more waste from additional dwellings;
- Where will bin storage be located;
- Concern about the small amount of time given to make comments (*Officer Note: the statutory 21 day consultation period was given when the site notice was put up*).
- Problems viewing the plans on the Council’s website (*Officer Note: there has been issues with the Council’s website but this matter has now been resolved and no calls have been received with regards to not being able to view the planning application*).

## **6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

6.1 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) which states at Paragraph 11 “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

6.1.1 The development plan for this Local Planning Authority is the Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019). The relevant policies are:

- CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction
- CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- H1: Provision of Housing

- H2: Density and Mix
- H3: Affordable Housing
- H5: Standards for New Housing
- H7: Protecting the Existing Housing Stock
- H8: Residential Conversions
- H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
- TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are:

- Residential Conversions (Nov 2013)
- Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)
- Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)
- Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015)
- Affordable Housing (2013)

## **7. APPRAISAL**

The main matters to be considered are:

- Principle of development
- Design considerations and effect on character
- Living conditions of future residents and neighbouring properties
- Car and cycle parking
- Affordable Housing
- Other Matters

### **Principle of Development**

- 7.1 The proposed development is located within two existing residential blocks of flats. The principle of development is therefore acceptable subject to the compliance with the relevant policy requirements.

### **Design considerations and effect on character**

- 7.2 The proposal involves replacing the existing store doors with a kitchen window and installing two additional windows at the rear of each block. The proposed windows align with the existing windows in the blocks. All other alterations are internal and therefore the proposal is not considered harmful to the character or appearance of the area and is in accordance with Policy CC7 (Design and the Public Realm) of the Reading Borough Local Plan.

### **Living conditions of future residents and neighbouring properties**

- 7.2.1 Policy CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity) of the Reading Borough Local Plan states that 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:

- o Privacy and overlooking;
- o Access to sunlight and daylight;
- o Visual dominance and overbearing effects of a development;
- o Harm to outlook;

- o Noise and disturbance;
  - o Artificial lighting;
  - o Vibration;
  - o Dust and fumes;
  - o Smell;
  - o Crime and safety; or
  - o Wind
- 7.2.3 Policy H8 (Residential Conversions) states that proposals to convert buildings into self-contained flats will be assessed against the impact on the amenity and character of the surrounding area, particularly in terms of intensification of activity, loss of privacy, loss of external amenity space, the provision and location of adequate on-site car parking and the treatment of bin storage areas and other related servicing.
- 7.2.4 Policy H5 (Standards for New Housing) states that new build housing will comply with the nationally-described space standards. Although the proposal is for the conversion of two store areas each proposed dwelling has an internal area measuring 45sqm which exceeds the minimum gross internal floor area of 39sqm for a one person one bedroom dwelling.
- 7.2.5 The proposed internal layout is adequate and provides a kitchen closest to the main entrance door to each block of flats with the living and bedroom accommodation located at the rear with an outlook over the existing communal amenity space and the outlooks to the rear are raised, given the internal ground floor level. The internal layout will limit any noise from people entering the flats to the main habitable living space within each proposed flat and provide an acceptable amount of daylight and sunlight and outlook for future occupiers of the flats. Although the kitchen window is close to the main entrance doors to the flats, this is not an unusual arrangement in flat developments and the flat layout is such that the kitchen is not a habitable room.
- 7.2.6 There is not considered to be an adverse impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties due to overlooking or harm to outlook and on the basis of the information submitted the proposal would not adversely affect neighbouring properties in terms of noise and disturbance.
- 7.2.7 Existing communal outdoor space is provided within the grounds of the existing development which complies with Policy H10 (Private and Communal Outdoor Space) whilst bin storage remains as existing which is located outside each block.
- 7.2.8 The proposed flats are considered acceptable in terms of their impact on neighbouring properties and future occupiers of the flats in accordance with the identified policies and guidance.

### **Car and cycle parking**

- 7.3 There is no allocated parking at Aveley Walk and Transport Strategy has no objections to the proposal subject to a condition restricting parking permits should a residents parking scheme be introduced. Transport Strategy has requested secure cycle parking however there is no existing cycle parking within Aveley Walk. A cycle parking space was proposed inside the main entrance of the flats however it was not clear how this would be secure and it is likely to have encouraged further cycle parking which could be

potentially hazardous in terms of blocking access in the event of an emergency. On balance, officers consider that opportunities for providing a cycle parking space have been considered but are not being sought in this instance.

### **Affordable Housing**

- 7.4 The applicant is willing to enter into a Unilateral Undertaking to secure the two proposed dwellings as affordable rental properties. This is acceptable and in accordance with Policy H3 (Affordable Housing) and the Council's Supplementary Planning Documents Planning Obligations under Section 106 (2015) and Affordable Housing (2013).

## **8. OTHER MATTERS**

### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 8.1 CIL was implemented by the Council from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. Although the proposed scheme would be CIL liable development, because there is no net gain in GIA there would be no CIL charge for this scheme.

### Equalities Impact

- 8.2 When determining an application for planning permission 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 as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this 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 proposed development.

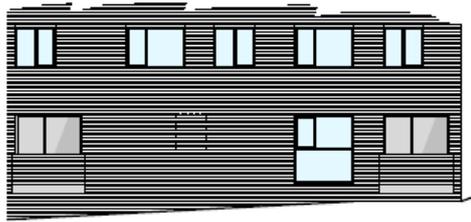
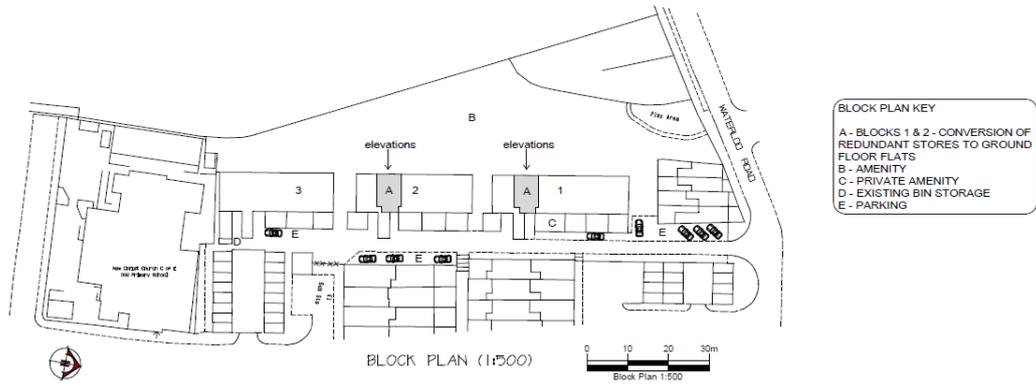
### Neighbour comments

- 8.3 Neighbour comments have been received with regards to the capacity of the drains and the flats already being overcrowded. With regards to the drains this matter will be dealt with under the Building Regulations and the Statutory Undertaker and is not a planning matter. The proposal makes efficient alternative use of two redundant store areas which is considered to have minimal impact on the existing development.

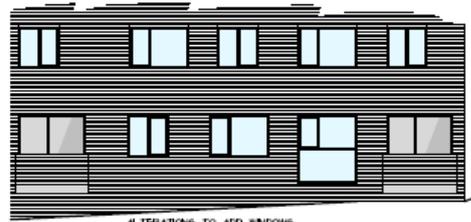
## **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 This proposal has been carefully considered in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and supplementary planning documents. The recommendation is shown above.

Case Officer: Claire Ringwood



WEST/REAR  
PART EXISTING ELEVATIONS (1:100)



WEST/REAR  
PART PROPOSED ELEVATIONS (1:100)

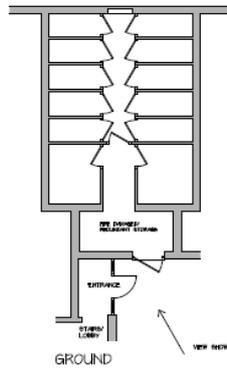


EAST/FRONT  
PART EXISTING  
ELEVATIONS (1:100)  
BLOCKS 1 AND 2

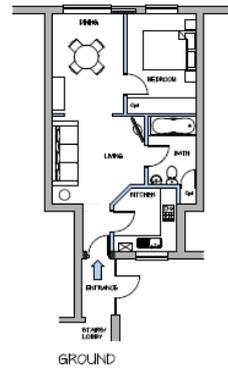


EAST/FRONT  
PART PROPOSED  
ELEVATIONS (1:100)

STORE REPL



EXISTING PLANS (1:100)



PROPOSED PLANS



BLOCKS 1 AND 2 ENTRANCES - EXISTING VIEWS