

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTORATE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 29th May 2019	ITEM NO.
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Ward: Southcote

App No: 190306

Address: Jimmy Green Court, 52 Coronation Square

Proposal: Conversion of advice centre to a two bedroom apartment

Applicant: Reading Borough Council

Date validated: 21 February 2019

Target Date: 18 April 2019

Extension: 7th June 2019

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Full Planning Permission, subject to conditions and informatives

Conditions to include:

1. Time limit for implementation (3 years)
2. Materials (to match existing)
3. Approved plans
4. Bicycle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans
5. Standard construction hours
6. No burning of waste on site

Informatives to include:

7. Positive and Proactive Statement
8. Terms and conditions
9. Need for building regulations
10. Highways

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The application site comprises an advice centre on the ground floor of an existing apartment building known as Jimmy Green Court. The building is owned by Reading Borough Council and contains flatted apartments over three storeys.
- 1.2 The advice centre service has been relocated and the unit is no longer used. The centre was accessed off a glazed porch located on the western elevation of the block and included an advice shop, meeting room and interview room. Further facilities include a kitchenette and toilet.
- 1.3 The building itself is set back from Coronation Square with Virginia Way forming the northern boundary of the site. The building is surrounded by amenity areas formed of open lawns with trees and hedges set back at some distance. The eastern side of the building includes a play area to the south and more hedges to the north. The site has multiple pedestrian accesses from Coronation Square and Virginia Way. An existing bin store is also situated on the eastern side of the building.

- 1.4 Residential uses/properties make up the majority of the surrounding area. The site is not within any Conservation Area and there are no nearby listed heritage assets. The site lies in Flood Zone 1, this being an area at lowest risk from flooding.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The proposal is to convert the redundant ground floor advice centre to a two bedroom apartment. The new apartment will be used by Reading Borough Council to provide additional affordable housing for local people.
- 2.2 The major physical change to facilitate the new two-bed apartment will be the removal of the exiting glazed porch and the provision of a new access via the southern elevation of the building. The two-bedroom apartment will accommodate a combined kitchen and dining area, separate lounge, a bathroom and two bedrooms. In addition to cupboard space provided in each bedroom, two separate storage spaces will be provided elsewhere in the apartment. The bathroom will be a disabled accessible facility.
- 2.3 New windows will be added to provide natural light and ventilation into the unit. These are positioned on the western elevation at the location of the former entrance and porch and the southern elevation replacing a door. The existing access to other apartments within the block will remain unchanged.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

Reference No.	Detailed Description	Outcome
950224	Conversion of bedsits and common room into neighbourhood centre. Regulation 3.	Application Permitted on 5 May-95

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Statutory:
None
- 4.2 Non-statutory:
- 4.2.1 RBC Environmental Protection was consulted on 6 March 2019. Their comments received on 29 March 2019 stated;
“Environmental Protection concerns
○ Construction and Demolition phase

Construction and demolition phases - extensions / renovations

We commonly receive complaints about noise and dust caused by construction and demolition works, particularly working outside reasonable hours and about smoke from bonfires associated with the burning of waste on site of minor developments. I recommend an informative is attached to help prevent complaints. There should be no burning of waste on the site”.

- 4.2.2 RBC Transport Strategy was consulted on 6 March 2019. Their comments received on 1 April 2019 stated;

“The application site comprises of an advice Centre on the ground floor of an apartment building owned by Reading Borough Council. 16 existing flats are provided over 3 storeys. This application seeks to convert the advice centre into 1 x 2 bedroom flat.

The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council’s adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space for the 2 bedroom unit. No on-site parking is provided for the existing flats and none is proposed for the new dwelling. This is acceptable given that the proposed use would create less trips than the advice centre and its associated use.

Existing bin storage is situated to the eastern side of the property which will be used for the new unit. It is recommended that the Council’s waste and Re cycling team are contacted to ensure the correct capacity of bins are provided for the increased number of units. It is assumed that the collection service will remain unchanged.

The Design and Access Statement states that the existing on site cycle storage is to be increased with 7 new secure cycle spaces. Details have been provided of individual cycle lockers which are deemed acceptable.

There are no Transport objections to this application subject to the conditions and informatives stated below:

DC3 Bicycle parking space provided in accordance with approved plans

No dwelling/building hereby permitted shall be occupied until the bicycle parking facility for that dwelling/building has been provided in accordance with the approved plan. The facility shall be kept available for bicycle parking at all times thereafter.

Reason: To encourage travel by sustainable alternatives to driving a motorcar in accordance with the Local Planning Authority’s approved transport policies CS23 and CS24.

IF3 Highways

i) The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic.

ii) Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough’s Council’s document “Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading”. The applicant should note that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council’s website”.

4.3 Public consultation:

4.3.1 Forty-four households were consulted via letter, as well as a site notice being displayed. No letters of representation were received.

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2019
National Planning Practice Guidance 2019
Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) Order 2018
- 5.2 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (RCS)
(Adopted January 2008 - amended 2015)
 - CS1: Sustainable Construction and Design
 - CS4: Accessibility and Intensity of Development
 - CS7: Design and the Public Realm
 - CS15: Location, Accessibility, Density and Housing Mix
 - CS18: Residential Conversions
 - CS24: Car/Cycle Parking
 - CS36: Biodiversity and Geology
- 5.3 Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) (Altered 2015)
 - SD1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - DM1: Adaptation to Climate Change
 - DM4: Safeguarding Amenity
 - DM7: Accommodation for Vulnerable People
 - DM8: Residential Conversions
- 5.4 Supplementary Planning Documents:
 - “Parking Standards and Design” (2011)
 - “Residential Conversions” (2013)

6. APPRAISAL - Planning Applications

(i) Legal context

6.1 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.

(ii) Main Issues

- 6.2 The main issues are considered to be:
 - (i) Principle of Development
 - (ii) Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area
 - (iii) Impact on amenity
 - (iv) Parking
 - (v) Affordable Housing
 - (vi) Other Matters

6.3 Principle of Development

6.3.1 The site lies within a sustainable location with a number of bus services operating from the nearby stops along Southcote Lane to the south. A number of facilities are located around Coronation Square including Southcote Library, Southcote Clinic and a small convenience store. Additional family accommodation in the form of a two bedroom flat would be appropriate in this area. The proposal involves the re-use of a vacant former community-type use, but the applicant has

confirmed that this is no longer required and therefore officers advise that the application is suitable in terms of Policy CS31.

6.3.2 Whilst Policy CS18 (and the related SPD) relates to the conversion of existing residential dwellings to apartments, some of its provisions should be noted in this instance. The policy specifically states that proposals for residential conversions will be considered acceptable assuming that the proposed conversion would not have an adverse impact on a variety of factors, including:

- Amenity
- Character of the surrounding area
- Intensification
- Privacy
- External amenity space
- On-site parking
- Bin storage

6.3.3 Officers consider that the proposal raises no concerns in respect of the above criteria. The principle of the proposed residential conversion is acceptable, subject to compliance with other relevant policies of the development plan.

6.4 Design and impact on the character of the surrounding area

6.4.1 The proposed conversion involves the removal of the glazed entrance porch, and the other external changes are considered to be relatively minor. The external alterations are considered to be minor and suitable in terms of the character of the surrounding area, or the street scene from a design perspective and comply with Policy CS7.

6.4.2 The proposal involves the installation of external cycle storage facilities. These cycle storage units are designed by a company known as 'Velo-Safe'. A bank formed of 7 Velo-Safe Lockers, in an alternating formation so that the triangular shapes interlink with one another will give a front width of 3.9 metres, and a rear width of 3.38 metres. The length will remain 1.9 metres.

6.4.3 This storage facility for bicycles is considered to be positioned in a suitable location near to the proposed development and will appropriate in terms of impacts on the surrounding area.



Proposed cycle storage lockers.

6.5 Impacts upon Amenity

6.5.1 The proposed flat will not look out onto the private amenity space of any other dwellings, and as such there are no concerns with regards to overlooking. There is no defensible amenity space at ground level, but this situation is common in this area. No conflict with Policy DM4 is advised.

6.5.3 Policy DM8 states, “*Proposals to convert properties into self-contained flats...will only be acceptable where...there are no unacceptable adverse impacts to other residential properties arising from noise and disturbance in terms of the number and layout of units proposed and the proximity to other properties*”. It continues to state, “*Bin and cycle storage [should be]...of an appropriate size and standard for the units proposed and should be located at ground floor level with easy access*”.

6.5.4 The proposed flat will have a gross internal floor area of 86.79m². This measurement is above the gross internal floor areas set out within the ‘Technical housing standards - nationally described space standard’ (March 2015). The minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m²) space standards are:

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		

6.5.5 It is considered that there will not be a detrimental impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties or the amenity of the future occupiers of the proposed apartment. The proposed scheme complies with Policies DM4 and DM8 of the Sites and Detailed Policy Document 2012 (Altered 2015).

6.6 Parking

6.6.1 The site is located within Zone 3, Secondary Core Area, of the Council’s adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD. In accordance with the adopted Parking Standards and Design SPD, the development would be required to provide a parking provision of 1 space for the 2 bedroom unit. No on-site parking is provided for the existing flats and none is proposed for the new dwelling. This is acceptable given that the proposed use would create less trips than the advice centre and its associated use. Further to this, the proposal involves the erection of 7 cycle storage lockers. Officers advise that there are no transport issues as a result of the proposal.

6.7 Affordable Housing

6.7.1 At its meeting of the Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee on 13th July 2016, 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.

6.7.2 As the proposal relates to the conversion of rooms in existing buildings Policy DM6 would not apply.

6.8 Other Matters

6.8.1 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.

6.8.2 Community Infrastructure Levy

The property to be converted has recently been occupied and therefore would not be liable for CIL.

7. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

7.1 The principle of the loss of the advice centre (D1 use) is accepted and the principle of the use of the space as a dwelling is suitable. The proposed development will involve some external works, but these are considered to cause no detrimental impact upon the character of the area or the street scene.

7.2 From an amenity perspective, the proposal is considered to be appropriate.

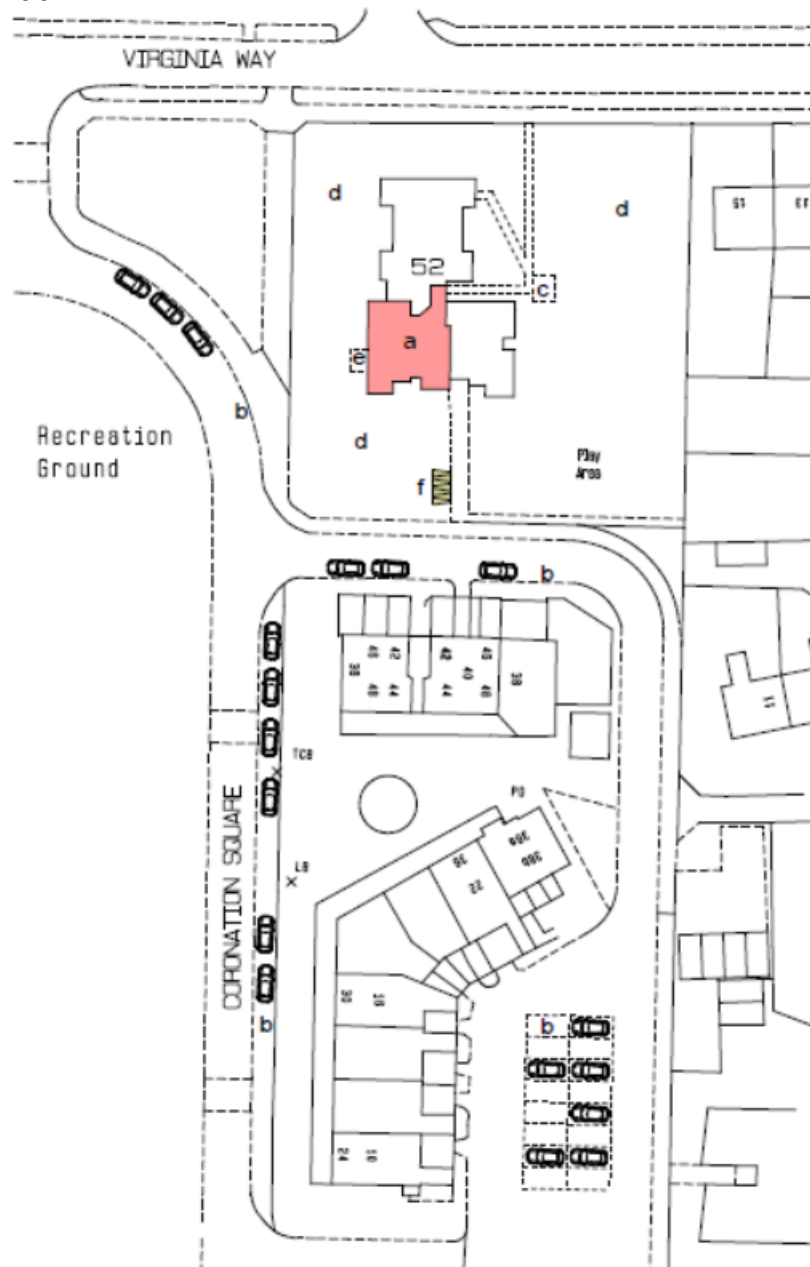
7.3 The proposal is considered to be acceptable in planning terms and the Officer's recommendation is to grant planning permission.

Plans:

Plan Type	Description	Drawing Number	Date Received
All Plans	Location Plan, Block Plan, Floor Plans, and elevations - Existing & Proposed	18/016/01	22 Feb-19

Case Officer: James Overall

Appendix




Proposed Block Plan

EXISTING/PROPOSED BLOCK PLAN KEY

No 52 Jimmy Green Court

16 no existing flats


a - advice centre converted to 2 bedroom flat

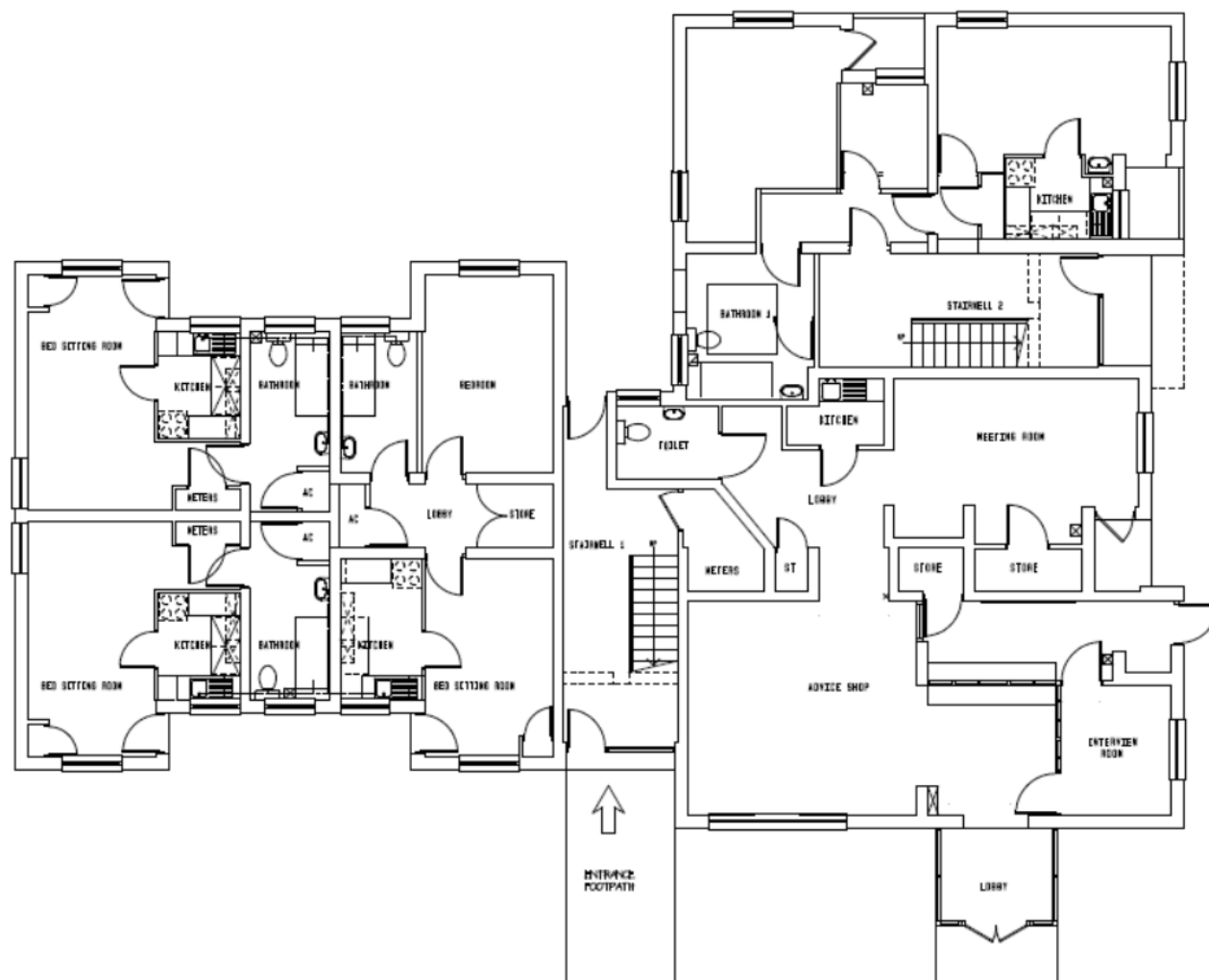
 b - nearby parking

c - bin storage area

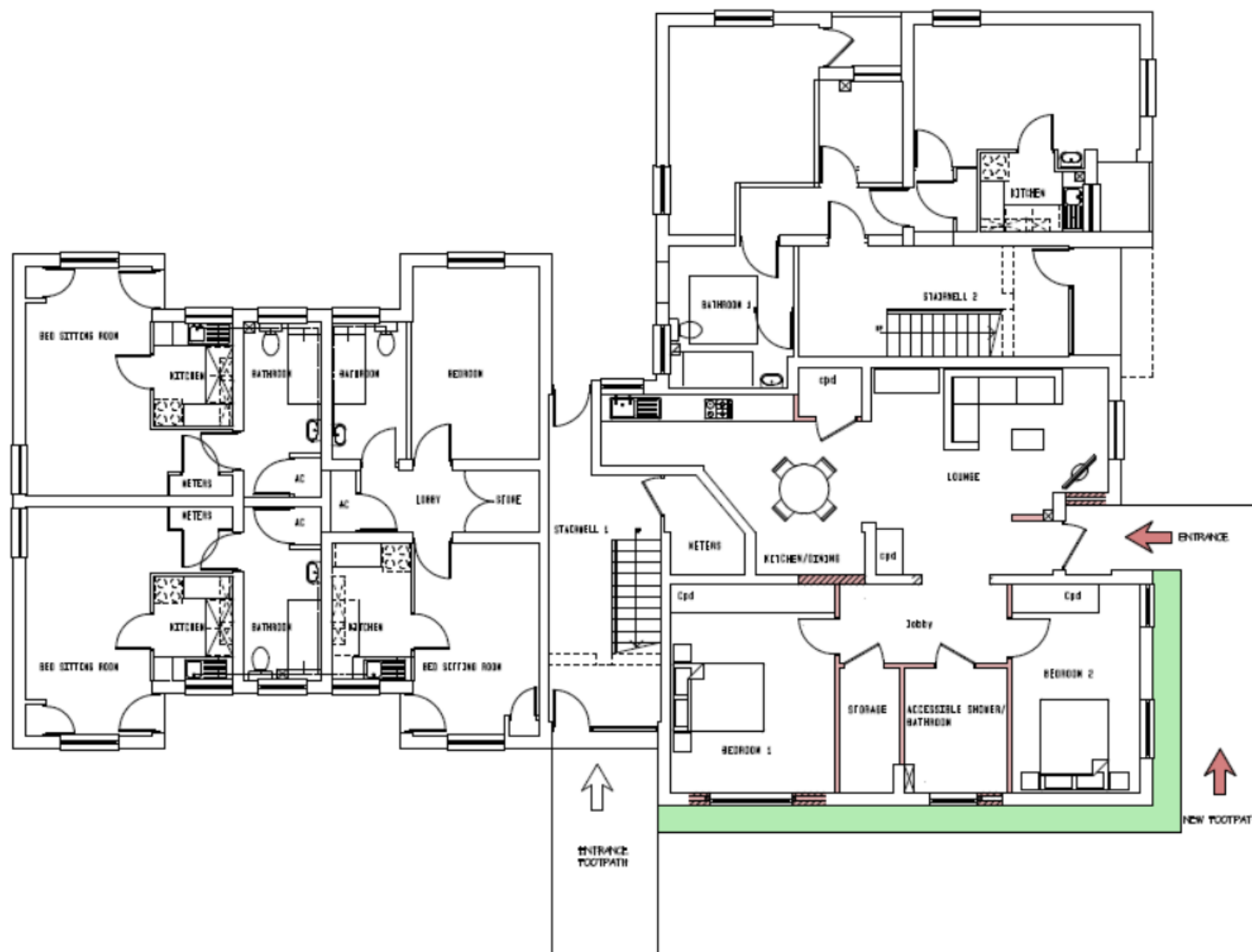
d - amenity

e - entrance conservatory removed

 f - new secure cycle storage



Existing Ground Floor Plan



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Existing Elevations



EAST



SOUTH

Proposed Elevations