

Ward: Park

Appeal No: APP/E0345/W/19/3222966

Planning Ref: 181533/FUL

Site: 62 Manchester Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 3QN

Proposals: Conversion of existing commercial basement to a 1-bed flat (Class C3)

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Decision level: Delegated decision on 29/11/18

Method: Written representations

Decision: Appeal dismissed

Dates Appeal Determined: 2 September 2019

Inspector: Sian Griffiths BSc(Hons) DipTP MScRealEst MRTPI MRICS

SUMMARY OF DECISION

The appeal site concerns a basement forming part of 62 Manchester Road, a corner site in the Newtown area. The proposal would result in the creation of a 1 bed flat of 33.2sqm, with a small area of outside space. The main access is from external steps from street level down to the basement entrance.

Planning permission had been granted for the extension of the single storey basement to provide additional retail storage (ref. 180491/FUL). Whilst the loss of retail floorspace was not objectionable, permission was refused under delegated powers for conversion to a 1-bed flat (Class C3) due to shortfalls in the quality of accommodation, poor natural light and the lack of a satisfactory outlook.

The Inspector did not give weight to the daylight report presented by the Appellant as it failed to consider sunlight over a range of values, assess changes in levels of daylight during the year, or explain the results.

Despite additional windows having been inserted into the basement, these did not form part of the approved submission. The Inspector therefore remained unconvinced of the merits of the proposals in relation to the levels of daylight achievable within the proposed flat, particularly as there would be areas of the flat that would clearly have comparatively little daylight. The Inspector further considered that the outlook would be very restricted and enclosed with no views from the bedroom of living area and would not provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers.

The Inspector was not persuaded by the Appellant's argument that the proposal would be an 'affordable smaller unit'. The Inspector noted that there would be some benefits associated with the construction and ongoing occupation of the flat, and that the principle of the location for new residential development was not in dispute between the parties. However the Inspector considered that these benefits were small and given the size of the proposal, they did not outweigh the harmful factors identified.

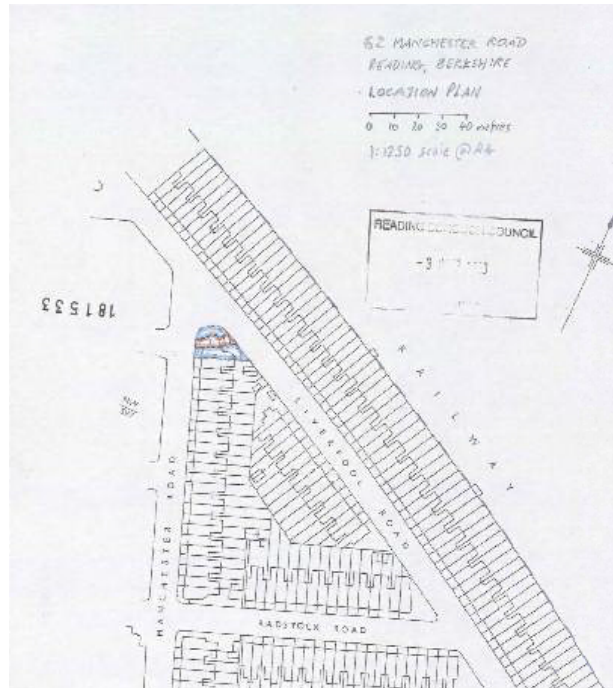
HPDRS' COMMENTS ON THE DECISION:

The Inspector made a clear and well-reasoned assessment of the harm of the proposal in relation the harmful impact to daylight and outlook and sense of enclosure. This is a part-retrospective proposal and it is pleasing that the Inspector supported the Council's identification of shortfalls in the quality of the proposed basement accommodation.

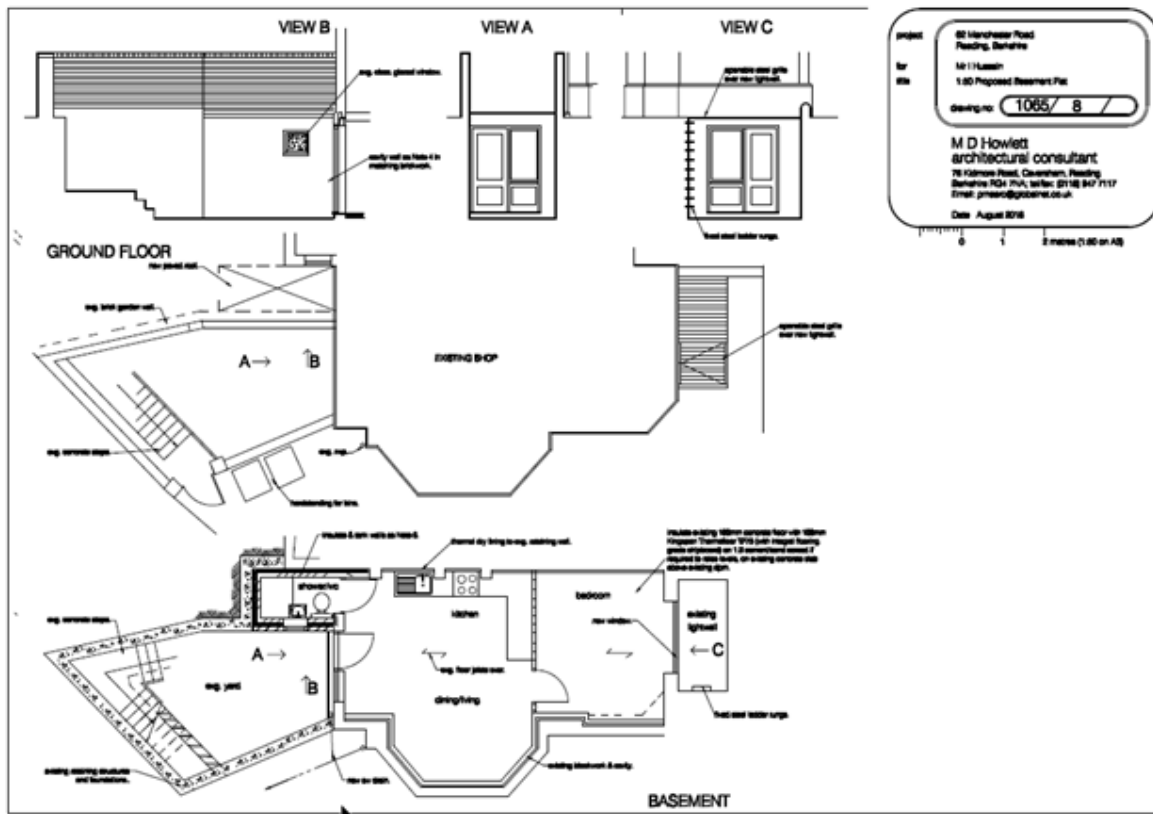
The addition of two additional windows within the basement area do not have planning permission. These works are now being assessed as to whether they are a breach of

planning permission and further, the expediency of enforcement action.

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes



Location Plan



Proposed (refused) Plan