



**REGULATORY  
SERVICES  
COMMITTEE**

**REPORT**

23 February 2012

**Subject Heading:**

P1752.11 – 7 Market Place, Romford – Conversion of first and second floors to four self-contained flats using existing access. Minor window alteration in the light well (side elevation) and new cycle store and refuse store at rear (received 21 November 2011)

**Report Author and contact details:**

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**Policy context:**

Local Development Framework  
The London Plan  
National Planning Policy Statements/  
Guidance

**Financial summary:**

None

**The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

Clean, safe and green borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SUMMARY

This report concerns an application for the conversion of existing offices on the first and second floor into four self-contained flats using the existing access. Minor window alterations are also proposed with a new cycle store and refuse store at the rear. A legal agreement is required due to the limited availability of on-street parking and as none would be provided for future residential occupiers on site. Staff consider that the proposal would nonetheless accord with residential, environmental and highways policies contained in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document and approval is therefore recommended.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the application is unacceptable as it stands, but would be acceptable subject to the completion of a legal agreement to secure the following:

- That all future occupiers save for blue badge holders are restricted from applying for residents parking permits

That Staff be authorised to enter into such an agreement and that upon its completion planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. SC04 The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

**Reason:** To comply with the requirements of section 91 of the Town and Country Act 1990.

2. NSC01 The area set aside for car parking for the shop shall be retained permanently thereafter for the accommodation of vehicles visiting the site and shall not be used for any other purpose.

**Reason:** To ensure that car parking accommodation is made permanently available in the interest of highway safety.

3. SC09 Before any of the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples of all materials to be used in the external construction of the building(s) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

**Reason:** To ensure that the appearance of the proposed development will harmonise with the character of the surrounding area.

4. SC32 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans, particulars and specifications.

**Reason:** The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted.

5. SC58 Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, provision shall be made for the storage of refuse awaiting collection according to details which shall previously have been agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Unless otherwise agreed in writing these details shall include provision for underground containment of recyclable waste.

**Reason:** In the interests of the amenity of occupiers of the development and also the visual amenity of the development and the locality generally.

6. SC59 Prior to completion of the works hereby permitted, cycle storage of a type and in a location previously submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall be provided and permanently retained thereafter.

**Reason:** In the interests of providing a wide range of facilities for non-motor car residents, in the interests of sustainability.

7. SC43 The building shall be so constructed as to provide sound insulation of 45 DnT,w + Ctr dB (minimal value) against airborne external noise to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with the recommendations of Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 "Planning & Noise" 1994.

8. NSC02 Prior to completion of the works hereby permitted, details of additional external lighting in the passageway between the rear door and the cycle/refuse store which shall have previously been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall be provided and permanently retained thereafter.

**Reason:** In the interests of residential amenity and public safety in accordance with Policies DC61 and DC63 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

## **INFORMATIVES**

### 1. Reason for approval:

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the aims, objectives and provisions of Policies CP17, DC2, DC3, DC5, DC7, DC33, DC34, DC37, DC55, DC60, DC61, DC62, DC63, DC70 and DC72 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

Note: Following a change in government legislation a fee is now required when submitting details pursuant to the discharge of conditions, in order to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) (Amendment) (England) Regulations, which came into force from 06.04.2008. A fee of £85 per request (or £25 where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwellinghouse) is needed.

### 2. The planning obligations recommended in this report have been subject to the statutory tests set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 and the obligations are considered to have satisfied the following criteria:-

- (a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) Directly related to the development; and
- (c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

### 1. **Site Description**

1.1 The site comprises a three-storey building with a shop to the ground floor (A1) and offices above. The front elevation to the north side of Market Place fronts onto the Romford Conservation Area and the site is within Romford Town Centre.

1.2 The surrounding area is a mixture of commercial, community and residential uses. The Lamb Public House adjacent to the site and St Edward's C of E Church are both Listed buildings.

### 2. **Description of Proposal**

2.1 The proposal is for the conversion of the first and second floors to four self contained flats using the existing access. There would be minor window alterations in the existing light well to increase the size of existing windows and the provision of a new cycle store and refuse store at the rear of the building.

### 3. **History**

- 3.1 P1377.97 Change of Use to a Licensed Betting Office Class A2 – Refused 31-07-98  
P1111.95 Erection of 90cm satellite dish Approved 10-11-95  
P0374.91 New shop front – Withdrawn 12-06-91  
P0855.90 P Alteration to existing shopfront & entrance doors Approved 27-07-90

### 4. **Consultation/Representations**

- 4.1 33 neighbouring occupiers were notified of the proposal. A site notice was posted and a press notice was placed in a local paper. There were no replies.
- 4.2 Thames Water have written to advise that they have no objection with regard to sewerage infrastructure.
- 4.3 The Metropolitan Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor has written to advise that the site's location is in an area of high crime levels. He advises that lighting should be provided and that the proposed cycle store would not be sufficient in his view. He requests the addition of a condition and informative regarding Secured by Design and ones for external lighting and details of cycle storage if permission is granted.
- 4.4 The Fire Brigade (LFEDA) indicate that access should meet 16.3 of ADB Volume 2 but if this cannot be achieved a fire main should be provided in accordance with 15.3 and access meet 16.6. These are the Building Regulations documents and a separate application would be needed.

### 5. **Staff Comments:**

- 5.1 The issues in this case are the principle of development, its impact on the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings, its impact in the streetscene, on residential amenity and parking/highways/servicing. Policies CP1, CP4, DC2, DC4, DC33, DC35, DC36, DC61, DC63, DC67 and DC68 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan, Policy ROM14 of the Romford Area Action Plan and SPD on Residential Design are relevant. Also relevant are London Plan (2010) Policies 3.3, 3.5, 3.8, 4.7 and 7.3 and PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) and PPS3 (Housing) as well as the draft NPPF.

#### *Principle of development*

- 5.2 Policy CP1 indicates that housing will be the preferred use of non-designated sites. The site lies in the Town Centre. Policy ROM14 of the Romford Area Action Plan DPD indicates that Romford will contribute to the Borough's housing target. Policy DC4 indicates that conversions to residential will be acceptable subject to them meeting a number of criteria

(which are considered in detail below). It is therefore considered that the proposal would be acceptable in principle.

#### *Impact on the Conservation Area*

- 5.3 The proposal would not result in any changes to the front elevation of the property and the proposed changes to the light-well windows would be to make them the same size as the existing larger windows. It is not considered that there would be any significant impact on the character and appearance of the Romford Conservation Area. The development would have a neutral impact on the Conservation Area.

#### *Impact on Listed Buildings*

- 5.4 The St Edward's Church and The Lamb Public House are Listed Buildings. The proposal is mainly a conversion of the existing building and as such the only external changes are to the rear to provide a cycle/refuse store and to the side elevation to increase the size of existing windows in the light-well. It is considered that these changes, due to their small scale and location, would not have any significant impact on the adjoining/nearby Listed Buildings or their settings.

#### *Density/Site Layout*

- 5.5 The proposal is to convert the existing two floors of office development into 4 residential units, each with 2 bedrooms. The application site area is 0.03 ha and therefore the density would be approximately 133 units per hectare. Policy DC2 indicates that in the Central area, the range would be 240-435 units per hectare. The proposal is clearly below this range, nonetheless as a conversion of an existing building the main consideration is whether the scheme is of a high standard of design and layout in accordance with Policy DC4.
- 5.6 The London Plan indicates at Policy 3.5 that 2-bed units should have a minimum space of 61sqm for 3 people units and 70sqm for 4 bed units. The size for each flat would be approximately 85sqm for the rear flats and 94sqm for the front flats which would be in excess of the minimum spaces standards.
- 5.7 Policy DC4 requires that each flat has a reasonable outlook and aspect, a minimum of one, one-bed self-contained flat is provided with separate sleeping area and that the property has a safe and secure access from the street. Each proposed flat would utilise the existing front and rear windows for the main living areas with the light-well providing separate windows to each bedroom. It is recognised that if No.9-11 is redeveloped in future that the outlook could be curtailed, however it is considered that the main windows would provide a sufficiently acceptable outlook for the new flat dwellers. Each flat would have at least one bedroom and there are two secure accesses, one from the street and one to the rear servicing area. It is considered that the proposal meets these criteria.

- 5.8 Policy DC4 also requires that residents/visitors are able to park without detriment to highway safety taking into account the availability of on and off street parking, that there is no conflict with surrounding uses, that the proposal would not result in loss of privacy to existing occupants and living rooms would not abut the bedrooms of adjoining dwellings. There would be no parking associated with the proposed development; nonetheless it is not expected in an area with the highest level of public transport accessibility for there to be a need for private vehicles. There is short term parking to the rear of the building/servicing area and there are a large number of public parking spaces available in the town centre. It is considered that there would be no detriment to the highway from this proposal. There are a night club, church and public house (at No.5 Market Place) in close proximity to the application site as well as other town centre uses, many of which have no time restrictions. It is considered that these uses may affect the occupiers of the units, nonetheless these are pre-existing and would be purchased/let on a "buyer-beware" basis. There are no residential used directly adjoining the flats such that the layout would be acceptable.
- 5.9 Staff therefore consider that the proposal would therefore accords with Policy DC4.

*Design/Impact on Street/Garden Scene*

- 5.10 The only two external changes which would have an impact in the streetscene are the change to the window size to the Eastern elevation in the light well and the provision of cycle and refuse stores to the rear of the building.
- 5.11 The changes to the windows would be to enlarge windows to match the size of the other existing windows in the light-well. It is considered that this change, although visible in the streetscene, would not have any impact in the streetscene.
- 5.12 The proposed refuse storage would be a small extension to the rear of the building in matching materials. The proposed location and height would be satisfactory.
- 5.13 The proposed cycle storage would be open. While the provision of cycle storage is acceptable, the design of the proposal is not, however details could be submitted via a condition if planning permission is granted.

*Impact on Amenity*

- 5.14 The adjoining units are in office use (A2) above the bank to the east of the application site and above the pub are rooms used intermittently by staff needing a bed for the night. Staff consider, on this basis, and that other pub rooms could be used before that adjacent to the proposed living space, that

there would be no specific impact from the proposed first floor accommodation on residential amenity.

- 5.15 There are existing residential occupiers above units to North Street to the rear of the application site. Given the distances involved and that the flats are located within a high density area, it is considered that there would not be any significant impact on these occupiers residential amenity from the proposed development.

#### *Highway/Parking*

- 5.13 Within this area, Policy DC2 indicates that between 0 and 1 parking space should be provided for each property. No parking spaces would be provided. Highways have requested a planning obligation (Section 106 agreement) to require prevention of the new occupiers from purchasing residential parking permits as this would be detrimental to sustainable travelling alternatives available to the town centre dwellers.
- 5.14 In line with Annex 6, cycle parking provision would need to be provided on site and would be subject to a suitable planning condition.

#### *Section 106 agreement*

- 5.15 It is considered that as the proposal would not provide any parking on-site that the occupiers should be restricted from applying for residents parking permits.

#### *Other Issues*

- 5.16 The Secured by Design Officer indicates that open storage for cycles would not be acceptable but that further details could be provided via a suitably worded condition. He also requests details of suitable external lighting between the rear door and the refuse/cycle stores; again a suitable condition could be attached to any grant of planning permission.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The proposal is for conversion of existing offices into 4 self-contained flats within the town centre. It is considered that the proposal would be acceptable in principle and that the details of the scheme are acceptable in accordance with Policy DC4 and DC33 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies and would not result in any adverse impact to the setting of either Listed Building or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### 7. **Financial Implications and risks:**

7.1 None

### 8. **Legal Implications and risks:**

8.1 A legal agreement would be needed to restrict access to residential parking permits.

### 9. **Human Resource Implications:**

9.1 None

### 10. **Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications:**

10.1 The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to Equalities and Diversity.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. The planning application as submitted or subsequently revised including all forms and plans.
2. The case sheet and examination sheet.
3. Ordnance survey extract showing site and surroundings.
4. Standard Planning Conditions and Standard Green Belt reason for refusal.
5. Relevant details of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Article 4 Directions.
6. Copy of all consultations/representations received and correspondence, including other Council Directorates and Statutory Consultees.
7. The relevant planning history.