



**REGULATORY  
SERVICES  
COMMITTEE**

**REPORT**

30 June 2011

**Subject Heading:**

**P1184.10 – Upper floors of Quadrant  
Arcade, Market Place, Romford**

**Extension to third floor, alteration to  
window openings and conversion of  
first, second and third floor from retail  
and office use to form shared  
residential accommodation comprising  
85 no. ensuite bedrooms with shared  
kitchen facilities. (Application received  
23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010)**

**Report Author and contact details:**

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**Policy context:**

**Local Development Framework  
London Plan  
National Planning Policy  
None**

**Financial summary:**

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

Clean, safe and green borough	[X]
Excellence in education and learning	[X]
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	[ ]
Value and enhance the life of every individual	[ ]
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	[ ]

## **SUMMARY**

This application relates to the upper floors of the Quadrant Arcade which fronts onto the Market Place, Romford and is a locally listed building. This application seeks full planning permission for an extension to the third floor of the building and the conversion of the first, second and third floors of the building from retail and office use to form shared residential accommodation comprising 85 no. ensuite bedrooms with shared kitchen facilities. The planning issues are set out in the report below and include issues relating to the principle of development, the impact of the proposed development on the special character and appearance of the Romford Conservation Area, the impact on the character and setting of nearby listed buildings, the impact of the proposal on the character of the street scene and local environment generally, amenity issues, highways/parking issues and designing out crime issues. Staff consider the proposals to be acceptable, subject to a legal agreement to secure a restriction on the occupation of the residential accommodation, a financial contribution towards town centre improvements and a restriction to prevent future occupants from obtaining residents parking permits together with conditions. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the proposal is unacceptable as it stands but would be acceptable subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Legal Agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), to secure the following:

- A restriction to ensure that the development is only occupied by those in employment.
- A financial contribution of £30,000 to be used towards tree planting and landscaping improvement works within the local area.
- A restriction on residents of the development, save for blue badge holders, applying for parking permits within the local area.
- All contribution sums shall include interest to the due date of expenditure and all contribution sums to be subject to indexation from the date of completion of the Section 106 agreement to the date of receipt by the Council.
- The Developer/Owner to pay the Council reasonable legal costs associated with the agreement and the obligation monitoring fees.

That Staff be authorised to enter into a legal agreement to secure the above and upon completion of that agreement, grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out below.

1. Time limit - 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 Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Accordance with plans - 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. Also, in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

3. Materials - Before any of the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples of all materials to be used in the external construction of the buildings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. 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 and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61 and DC68.

4. Details of new windows - Full details of the new windows to be used in the conversion of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of the work. The windows shall be fitted in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the building and the character of the Romford Conservation Area and to ensure that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC68.

5. Refuse and recycling - Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, provision shall be made for the storage of refuse and recycling awaiting collection according to details which shall previously have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of amenity of occupiers of the development and also the visual amenity of the development and the locality generally, and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

6. Cycle storage - Prior to occupation of the development 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 and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC36.

7. Secure by Design - Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a full and detailed application for the Secured by Design award scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, setting out how the principles and practices of the Secured by Design Scheme are to be incorporated. Once approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Havering Crime Prevention Design Advisor the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interest of creating safer, sustainable communities and to reflect guidance in PPS1 and Policies CP17 and DC63 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

8. Details of CCTV - No development shall take place until such time as precise details of CCTV cameras, including details to control the extent of their area of vision, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in full prior to the occupation of the development hereby approved and maintained in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interests of security and in order that the development accords with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC61 and DC63.

9. Hours of construction - No construction works or construction related deliveries into the site shall take place other than between the hours of 08.00 to 18.00 on Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 hours on Saturdays unless agreed in writing with the local planning authority. No construction works or construction related deliveries shall take place on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

10. Construction methodology - Before development is commenced, a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority making provision for a Construction Method Statement to control the adverse impact of the development on the amenity of the public and nearby occupiers. The Construction Method statement shall include details of:

- a) parking of vehicles of site personnel and visitors;
- b) storage of plant and materials;
- c) dust management controls
- d) measures for minimising the impact of noise and, if appropriate, vibration arising from construction activities;
- e) predicted noise and, if appropriate, vibration levels for construction using methodologies and at points agreed with the local planning authority;
- f) scheme for monitoring noise and if appropriate, vibration levels using methodologies and at points agreed with the local planning authority; siting and design of temporary buildings;
- g) scheme for security fencing/hoardings, depicting a readily visible 24-hour contact number for queries or emergencies;
- h) details of disposal of waste arising from the construction programme, including final disposal points. The burning of waste on the site at any time is specifically precluded.

And the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and statement.

Reason: To protect residential amenity and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

11. Sound insulation - Prior to the first occupation of the commercial elements of the development shall be insulated in accordance with a scheme which shall previously have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in order to secure a reduction in the level of noise emanating from the building.

Reason: To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with the recommendations of Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 'Planning and Noise'.

12. Sound attenuation - The building shall be so constructed as to provide sound insulation of 43 DnT,w + Ctr dB (minimum value) against airborne noise and 62 L'nT,w dB (maximum values) against impact 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 and Noise'.

13. Assessment of noise from adjacent plant – Before any development is commenced a scheme for protecting the proposed rooms from noise from adjacent commercial activities and associated plant shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The applicant shall include specific consideration of existing air-conditioning and refrigeration units, deliveries and collections from adjacent commercial premises. Any works which form part of the approved scheme shall be completed before any room within the development is occupied.

Reason: To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with the recommendations of Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 – Planning and Noise.

## **INFORMATIVES**

1. In aiming to satisfy condition 7 and 8 above, the applicant should seek the advice of the Borough Crime Prevention Design Advisor. He can be contacted through either via the London Borough of Havering Planning Control Service or Romford Police Station, 19 Main Road, Romford, Essex, RM1 3BJ.

2. Reason for Approval:

The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies CP1, CP2, CP4, CP9, CP15, CP17, DC2, DC3, DC4, DC5, DC21, DC32, DC33, DC34, DC35, DC36, DC40, DC48, DC49, DC51, DC52, DC55, DC61, DC63, DC67, DC68 and DC72 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document as well as the provisions of Policies ROM6, ROM7, ROM10, ROM14, ROM17, ROM20 and ROM21 of the LDF Romford Area Action Plan Development Plan Document. The proposal is also considered to be in accordance with the provisions of Policies 2A.8, 3A.5, 3A.6, 3C.1, 3C.2, 3C.23, 3C.24, 3D.1, 3D.2, 4B.1, 4B.5, 4B.6, 4B.8 and 4B.12 of the London Plan.

### Planning Obligations

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 application site is located within the retail core area of Romford Town Centre on the southern side of the Market Place approximately 20 metres east of the Golden Lion crossroads. The site comprises the second and third floors of the Quadrant Chambers which is located above the Quadrant Arcade. The upper floors are presently largely vacant with some small scale office use. Retail uses are currently located at ground floor level with the upper floors being accessed by a staircase from within the rear of no. 20 Market Place. The building of which the application site forms part is of a flat roof design with the frontage being of 'Art Deco' style. The rear elevation of the building faces onto an open area formed by the roof tops of the Quadrant Arcade and adjacent buildings. A fire escape presently leads from the rear elevation of the building across the roof tops and down to ground level.
- 1.2 The Market Place frontage of the building is flanked on both sides and opposite by buildings of similar or lower storey heights. Adjacent buildings predominantly have retail or service uses at ground floor with storage or office uses on the upper floors. The frontage of the building onto the Market Place is located within the Romford Conservation Area. In close proximity to the application site are the listed buildings of Church House, Wykeham Hall and St. Edward's Church. The Quadrant Arcade itself is identified at a local level as being a building of local historical and architectural interest.
- 1.3 Given the location of the site there is no dedicated service yard for vehicular traffic. The ground floor retail units can however be accessed by an alleyway from the Market Place which passes adjacent to the western flank of the building. The site presently has no off street car parking.

**2. Description of Proposal**

- 2.1 The application seeks planning permission for an extension to the third floor of the building, alteration to window openings and the conversion of first, second and third floor from retail and office use to form shared residential accommodation comprising 85 no. ensuite bedrooms with shared kitchen facilities.
- 2.2 The proposal would see the existing third floor of the building extended forward by 7 metres and a new infill extension provided the entire width of the building some 32 metres. The proposed extension would not increase the overall height of the building. The extension would be finished with matching facing brickwork to the flanks and have a glazed frontage to the Market Place elevation.

- 2.3 To the west facing flank wall of the building it is proposed that a number of new window openings are formed together with the alteration of several existing openings to enable larger windows to be installed. To the east facing elevation of the building five new window openings are proposed.
- 2.4 The application proposes the conversion of the first, second and third floors of the building to form shared residential accommodation. The upper floors of the Quadrant Arcade fronting onto the Market Place are currently largely vacant. The upper floors were most recently in use for a mixture of retail and office purposes. The proposal would see the provision of 85 no. rooms with ensembles over the three floors with shared kitchen facilities. 50 no. of the proposed rooms are indicated as being intended for single occupation and vary in size between 11.4 square metres and 14.6 square metres. The remaining 34 rooms are intended for two person occupation and vary in size between 15.5 square metres and 21.4 square metres. It is proposed that 31 no. rooms are provided to the first floor, 31 no rooms to the second floor and 22 no. rooms to the third floor. To the first and second floors would be two shared kitchen areas with a single shared kitchen area to the third floor.
- 2.5 Access to the building would be via a dedicated staircase leading out onto the front elevation fronting the Market Place. The applicant has advised that each floor of the building would have restricted access (by key fob) to ensure that tenants are only able to access their own specific floor and kitchen facilities. CCTV is to be provided to cover the entrance to the building, corridors and kitchen areas. It is proposed that each room would have its own audio and video access system linked to the ground floor entrance.
- 2.6 The applicant is a letting and management company who intend to let the proposed rooms on a short term tenancies. The applicant has advised that the accommodation it hopes to provide would be aimed at working professionals and that those on Housing Benefit would not be eligible for a room. The applicant's supporting information advises that the proposal would not provide any form of hostel accommodation for vulnerable groups or provide any level of care. All prospective tenants would be required to provide references together with copies of a passport or driving licence. Tenancies would be in the form of Assured Short Hold Tenancy Agreements and would be for a period of six months to one year.
- 2.7 Given the number of rooms to be provided within the proposed scheme the applicant has advised that it is their intention to provide a full time manager on site. The manager would be responsible for dealing with day to day management issues within the building and for ensuring that facilities are kept in good working order.

### **3. Relevant History**

- 3.1 P1500.08 - New access to first floor. Extension to third floor and conversion of second and third floors to nine flats – Withdrawn



P1139.09 - Third floor roof extension, new external staircase and conversion of second and third floors to form 7 No. 2 bedroom flats and 1 No. 1 bedroom flat – Approved

P1579.09 - Conversion and extension to form five 2 bedroom flats, one 1 bedroom flat and one 3 bedroom flats - Approved

#### **4. Consultations/Representations**

- 4.1 The application was advertised and 230 neighbouring addresses notified by letter. No representations have been received.
- 4.2 The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority is not satisfied with the proposals as they advise that all parts of the building should be within 45 metres of a fire appliance. Given the travel distances involved within the building a dry rising water main would need to be installed within stair core 1. The LFEPA also consider that stair core 2 is not acceptable as a means of escape in the event of a fire. Both of these issues can be dealt with through Building Regulations.
- 4.3 The London Fire Brigade advises that no additional or alteration of existing fire hydrants is required.
- 4.4 English Heritage raises no comments and recommends that the application should be determined in accordance with adopted policy and guidance.
- 4.5 The Borough Crime Prevention Design Advisor raises no objection subject to the imposition of planning conditions covering CCTV, the submission of a Secure by Design application and a management statement.

#### **5. Relevant Policies**

##### **5.1 LDF Core Strategy Development Plan Document**

CP1 – Housing Supply  
CP2 – Sustainable Communities  
CP4 – Town Centres  
CP9 – Reducing the need to travel  
CP15 – Environmental Management  
CP17 - Design

##### **5.2 LDF Romford Area Action Plan Development Plan Document**

ROM6 – Respecting the historic environment  
ROM7 – Market Place  
ROM10 – Retail core  
ROM14 – Housing supply  
ROM17 – Greening Romford  
ROM20 – Urban design

ROM21 – Public spaces

5.3 LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document

DC2 – Housing mix and density  
DC3 – Housing design and layout  
DC4 – Conversions to residential and subdivision of residential uses  
DC5 - Specialist accommodation  
DC21 – Major developments and open space  
DC32 – The road network  
DC33 – Car parking  
DC34 – Walking  
DC35 – Cycling  
DC36 – Servicing  
DC40 – Waste recycling  
DC51 – Water supply, drainage and quality  
DC52 – Air quality  
DC55 – Noise  
DC61 – Urban design  
DC63 – Delivering safer places  
DC67 – Buildings of heritage interest  
DC68 – Conservation areas  
DC72 – Planning Obligations

5.4 The London Plan

2A.8 – Town centres  
3A.5 – Housing choice  
3A.6 – Quality of new housing provision  
3C.1 – Integrating transport and development  
3C.2 – Matching development to transport capacity  
3C.23 – Parking strategy  
3C.24 – Parking in town centres  
3D.1 – Supporting town centres  
3D.2 – Development in town centres  
4B.1 – Design principles for a compact city  
4B.5 – Creating an inclusive environment  
4B.6 – Safety, security and fire protection  
4B.8 – Respect local context and communities  
4B.12 – Heritage conservation

5.5 Government Guidance

Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development  
Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing  
Planning Policy Statement 4 – Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth  
Planning Policy Statement 5 – Planning for the Historic Environment  
Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 – Transport  
Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 – Planning and Noise

**6. Staff Comments**

6.1 The issues arising from this application are: the principle of development, the impact of the proposed development on the special character and appearance of the Romford Conservation Area, the impact on the character and setting of nearby listed buildings, the impact of the proposal on the character of the street scene and local environment generally, amenity issues, highways/parking issues and designing out crime issues.

6.1.1 This application follows a previous planning application (reference P1579.09) for the conversion and extension of the subject building to form five 2 bedroom flats, one 1 bedroom flat and one 3 bedroom flats which was approved in January 2010. This application is identical to the previous approval in that the proposed third floor extension would be the same. This current application differs however in that internally part of the building would be converted to form shared residential accommodation rather than individual self contained flats.

**6.2 Principle of Development**

6.2.1 The application proposes the conversion of the first, second and third floors of the building to form shared residential accommodation. For the most part the upper floors of the building are currently vacant having most recently been in retail use in connection with the ground floor unit. A portion of the first and second floors are currently in office use. The proposal would result in the loss of the retail and office floor space. It should be noted that the loss of the existing commercial floor space has previously been accepted through the approval of the previous application.

6.2.2 The application site is located within the retail core area of Romford Town Centre where Policy ROM10 seeks to encourage the provision of retail and service uses at ground floor level. The policy does not specifically refer to the provision or retention of retail floor space on upper floors. The proposal would see the existing ground floor retail unit retained. In view of this staff are of the view that the loss of the upper floor retail floor space is acceptable and that it would not have a harmful impact on the retailing function of the town centre. Members will also wish to give consideration to the fact that the upper floor retail floor space has been vacant for at least three years and that this proposal would see the whole building brought back into use.

6.2.3 The proposal would see the loss of the existing upper floor office accommodation. Policy DC12 seeks to encourage new office development within Romford Town Centre however there are no policies which seek the retention of existing office floor space within this part of the town centre. The Council's strategy in respect of office development is to focus it within the Romford Office Quarter. Staff are of the view that the loss of the existing office accommodation is acceptable.

6.2.4 The proposal would see the introduction of a residential use to the upper floors of the building. The policy presumption outlined by Policy CP1 is such that new forms of residential development are normally directed outside of allocated areas such as town centres. However, the Romford Area Action Plan generally supports the principle of residential development above existing ground floor commercial development. Members will also be aware that the provision of residential development, albeit in a different form, has previously been accepted on this site.

6.2.5 In terms of Government guidance PPS1 encourages a mixture of uses within town centres, which can assist in creating vitality, diversity and a reduction in the need to travel. PPS1 also seeks to ensure that housing is available where jobs are created and encourages the provision of a mixture and range of housing. PPS6 encourages diversification within town centres and acknowledges that the occupation of flats above shops can increase activity in town centres during the evening and night, thereby contributing to personal safety. There is, therefore, general support for the principle of providing residential forms of development within the town centre.

6.2.6 The proposal would see the conversion of the upper floors of the building to form residential accommodation in the form of 85 individual rooms with shared kitchen facilities. The proposal would display a number of characteristics which are similar to a house in multiple occupation (HMO). The Council's Environmental Health Service is responsible for the licensing of such premises and has advised that there is a growing need for the type of accommodation proposed within the private sector to meet the need of those who would find it difficult to afford the rent of a conventional flat. In view of this growing need the Council has seen an increase in the number of shared houses in the Borough within the past five years. Most of these tend to be located in predominantly residential areas often in constrained terrace or semi-detached houses. The location and nature of these type of properties often results in complaints to the Council from adjoining residents in respect of noise nuisance. Given that shared accommodation of the nature proposed requires

### 6.3 Layout and amenity space provision

6.3.1 Policy DC4 advises that planning permission will only be granted for proposals involving conversions to residential provided the certain criteria are satisfied. These criteria state that proposals should provide adequate parking, not result in a conflict with adjoining uses, not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, provide adequate amenity space and ensure that the living rooms of new units do not abut the bedrooms of adjoining dwellings. Policy DC4 advises that proposals for residential communal uses will only be granted where the use would be within a detached property and well separated from neighbouring dwellings. Policy DC4 also advises that proposals for communal uses must not give rise to significantly greater levels of noise and disturbance. The provisions of Policy DC4 will be applied throughout this report.

- 6.3.2 This proposal would see the creation of a fairly large number of individual rooms with shared kitchen facilities provided in one concentrated location. Having regard to the issues outlined above staff are of the view that the siting of accommodation of the nature proposed is better suited within the town centre rather than a predominantly residential area. Staff are of the view that the proposed use of the building would not adversely conflict with adjoining uses.
- 6.3.3 Access to the upper floors of the building would be taken from a dedicated entrance door to the front elevation of the building. Access to each floor of the building would be controlled by way of key fob to ensure that occupiers are not able to move about freely between floors. Internally the layout of each floor would comprise of a central corridor with individual rooms to either side. Two shared kitchen areas would be provided per floor.
- 6.3.4 The Council does not have set room size standards contained within its LDF and as such a judgement needs to be made in this case concerning the size of the proposed rooms and the quality of the living environment which would be created. The proposal would see the creation of 50 one person rooms and 34 two person rooms. In order to assess whether the size of the proposed rooms is adequate staff have given consideration to the East London Guidance on HMO Standards. This document is used by the Environmental Health service of seven Council's is applied in the licensing of HMOs. The document provides guidance on minimum room sizes for bedrooms and kitchen areas based on the number of intended occupants/users. In the case of this proposal the proposed bedrooms and kitchen areas would meet or exceed the minimum recommended room sizes. Staff are of the view that the proposed rooms are of a suitable size and that the relationship between each of the rooms and their stacking is acceptable.
- 6.3.5 Each of the proposed rooms would benefit from natural light either from an external window or from light wells running through the inside of the building. The outlook from the proposed rooms would vary with those rooms to the front of the building having an outlook over the Market Place. Those rooms to the rear of the building would have an outlook over the roof tops of the Quadrant Arcade and adjoining buildings. 25 of the proposed rooms have sole external windows in west facing flank wall of the building. These rooms would have an outlook across the alleyway at the side of the building towards the rear of nos. 1 to 15 South Street. Towards the core of the building a total of 16 rooms would solely have from windows facing into a proposed internal light well.
- 6.3.6 Members are invited to exercise their judgement in respect of the quality of the living environment which would be created for future occupiers. A previous planning application for the conversion of the upper floors of the building to form self-contained residential flats was partly refused on the basis that the sole reliance on windows in the west facing flank wall of the building for some of the units failed to create a suitably high quality of living

environment for future occupiers. The close proximity of the rear of the adjoining buildings to the west fronting South Street means that the proposed flank windows would be separated by a distance of between 5 and 6.2 metres. As mentioned above a total of 16 rooms towards the centre of the building would only benefit from light and outlook via a proposed internal light well. Members may recall that the use of internal light wells was previously accepted

6.3.7 In reaching a view as to whether the quality of the living environment proposed is of a suitable quality Members will wish to consider the nature of the accommodation to be provided. The applicant has advised that it is their intention to offer the proposed rooms on short term tenancies of six months to a year. Staff are of the view that it is unlikely therefore that the proposed rooms would be occupied on a long term basis in the same way that a main residence would. The attractiveness of the rooms as living accommodation even for a relatively short period of time would essentially be a matter of choice for a prospective occupier. Members will also wish to give weight to the fact that the application site is situated within a town centre location where a lower of amenity is generally afforded for residential forms of accommodation than that of a predominantly residential area. Given the nature of the proposed accommodation, for short term let, staff are of the view that the quality of the living environment is acceptable.

6.3.8 Amenity space provides many benefits in terms of opportunities for recreation and leisure and enhancing quality of life through improved health. Members will be aware that the Council has adopted a Supplementary Planning Document for Residential Design. This document does not specifically refer to the need to provide amenity space within a development of the nature proposed. Members will be aware that in recent years, following Government guidance, the Council has approved a number of residential schemes within the town centre with limited or no amenity space provision. The development does not propose the provision of any amenity space nor any communal lounge space as you often find in shared residential accommodation. The nature of the proposed accommodation is such that when occupiers are within the building they would either spend time in their individual room or within the shared kitchen areas. In view of this it is likely that future occupiers would make use of external spaces within the town centre such as the church yard of St. Edward's Church and Ludwigshafen Place. The Council is presently working on several programmes within Romford Town Centre to improve the quality of the public realm. These include the creation of a new public open space within the Market Place and the greening of the town centre. The applicant has agreed to contribute a sum of £30k towards town centre improvements which could be secured via legal agreement in the event that Members are minded to grant planning permission. Staff are of the view that subject to this sum being secured the proposal is considered to make acceptable provision for future occupiers to benefit from a form of external space.

6.4 Community Safety issues

6.4.1 Policy DC63 of the LDF requires new development to address safety and security in the design of new development. Following discussions with the Borough Crime Prevention Design Advisor the applicant has submitted a statement to address the community safety issues arising from the proposed development. The applicant has advised that a full time on site manager will be provided with a room set aside on the first floor to act as a site office. In order to control entry into the building the applicant has advised that an access control system would be installed. Each room would have its own audio and video access system linked to the ground floor entrance. Access to each floor of the building would be controlled by way of key fob to ensure that occupiers are not able to move about freely between floors. The doorways to each room would also be lockable with self-closing devices fitted. CCTV is to be provided to cover the entrance to the building, corridors and kitchen areas. Staff are of the view that the proposal is acceptable in respect of community safety issues, subject to the imposition of conditions requested by the Borough Crime Prevention Design Advisor.

6.4.2 As mentioned above the nature of the proposed use is such that were planning permission granted a separate licence would need to be obtained from the Council's Environmental Health service. Staff from this service area have advised that the accommodation would be subject to an annual inspection as part of the licensing procedure and that the Council has significantly greater powers to take action against any management issues which arise than it does for any other form of residential property. Staff are of the view that there are sufficient mechanisms in place outside of the scope of the planning system to ensure that the accommodation is operated and maintained in a suitable manner.

6.4.3 The proposed residential accommodation would display some characteristics which are similar to that of a hostel. Hostels are typically, but not always, occupied by vulnerable persons whose housing needs differ either through the need for some level of on site support or care. In making this application, the applicant has given a clear statement of intent which indicates that the rooms are to be let to those in employment only. In light of these circumstances and to ensure that the accommodation provided remains for the persons identified by the applicant, an obligation within a Section 106 Legal Agreement is recommended. This will define the persons to whom the accommodation will be available for.

6.5 Conservation Area implications

6.5.1 The subject building is located in the Romford Conservation Area. Policy DC68 advises that planning permission for development within a Conservation Area will only be granted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and is well designed. Council policy and guidance also seeks to ensure that all works are sympathetic in design and materials to the character of the area and will not

detract from the architectural and environmental quality of the Conservation Area. Government policy contained within PPS 5 advises that there should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be.

- 6.5.2 The application site comprises part of the Quadrant Arcade which opened in September 1935 and is built in 'Art Deco' style. The Quadrant Arcade is not a Listed Building but is identified in the Council's Heritage Strategy for Romford and Hornchurch as a building of local historical and architectural interest. The subject building retains 1930s architectural features and reflects the growing prosperity and expansion of Romford in the inter-war period. The characteristic architectural features of the building are identified in the Romford Conservation Character Appraisal as being an important quality.
- 6.5.3 The aims of the original designation of the Romford Conservation Area were to protect the group of historic buildings at the west end of Market Place around the crossroads. The subject building is considered to form part of this historic group of buildings and its presence currently makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. In view of this any extension or alteration of the building needs to be carefully considered.
- 6.5.4 No objections are raised in principle in conservation terms to the partial conversion of the building which would ensure a long term future for the building. The proposed extension of the upper floor would see the fourth floor brought forward by 7 metres and extended across the entire width of the building. The extension would be set back from the front elevation of the building by 5 metres and as such would not adversely affect the principle façade. The extension has been designed with lightweight materials to the front elevation which staff consider would reduce its visual impact and provide a clear distinction between the extension and the original fabric of the building. The applicant's heritage statement demonstrates that the extension's visual impact of the upper floor extension from within the Market Place and wider Conservation Area would be limited. Given the subservient nature of the extension and the chosen materials staff are of the view that it would have an acceptable impact on the building. The existing parapet wall to the façade of the building, an important and distinctive feature, would remain unaffected by this proposal. A glass balustrade would be applied to the rear face of the parapet however this would not be visible from ground level.
- 6.5.5 The proposal would see the formation of a number of additional window openings in the east and west facing flank walls of the building. Some of the existing windows would also be replaced. Staff raise no objection to the new/replacement windows subject to their appearance matching as closely as possible the building's original critical windows. The proposed plans indicate that the windows would follow the original style and proportions however a condition is recommended to secure further details.



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6.5.6 Staff are of the view that the proposed roof extension and other alterations would have an acceptable impact on the street scene and the character of the original building. Staff are of the view that the proposal would suitably preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area subject to conditions in respect of materials. In this respect it is not therefore considered that there is a conflict with the provisions of Policy DC68 or Government guidance contained within PPS5.

### 6.6 Listed Building implications

6.6.1 The proposed fourth floor extension would be separated from the adjacent listed buildings of Church House, Wykeham Hall and St. Edward's Church by in excess of 50 metres. It is not considered therefore that the proposed extension would be visually dominant or intrusive in relation to the nearby listed buildings. Staff are of the view that the distance of the proposed extension from the listed buildings, would prevent any adverse effect on their setting.

### 6.7 Impact on amenity

6.7.1 Adjacent buildings predominantly have retail or service uses at ground floor with storage or office uses on the upper floors. Given that the offices are closed at night it is not considered that they would disturb occupiers of the proposed accommodation. Nevertheless a sound proofing condition is recommended, in the event Members are minded to grant planning permission, to ensure that amenity is safeguarded. Similarly, users of the office accommodation would not be materially affected by the proposed residential use.

6.7.2 The proposed residential accommodation would be located in a part of the town centre where there are several public houses which have late night opening hours. Given the town centre location of the site a certain degree of activity and associated noise is to be expected in comparison to a predominantly residential area. Staff are of the view that this is something prospective occupiers would take this into account before deciding whether to occupy a room in this location

6.7.3 Staff are of the view that the proposed roof extension, external canopy and window alterations would not result in an adverse impact on amenity.

### 6.8 Highway/parking issues

6.8.1 The site lies within the Romford PTAL zone and in accordance with guidance in PPG13, the London Plan and Policy DC2 staff consider it would be acceptable for no parking provision to be made for the proposed residential accommodation. The site is located in close proximity to the railway station, several main bus stops and public car parks. However, Policy DC2 requires that the applicant enter into a S106 planning obligation to prevent future occupiers applying for resident parking permits. In the

event that Members are minded to grant planning permission this could be secured by legal agreement. The applicant has also indicated that secure cycle parking could be provided at ground floor in order to promote alternatives means of transport. A condition requiring the submission of further details is recommended.

6.8.2 Servicing of the proposed residential accommodation would take place from the Market Place on non market days. Given the location of the site this arrangement is considered to be acceptable. Refuse and recycling would be stored, as presently, in the alleyway adjacent to the west facing flank wall of the building. Staff are of the view that suitable refuse collection and storage arrangements could be dealt with via condition.

6.9 Other matters

6.9.1 Members will be aware Policy DC6 of the LDF advises that the Council will seek 50% of new homes built in the Borough to be affordable housing. In the case of this application the proposal relates to the conversion of the upper floors of the building to form individual rooms which would be for short term let rather than forming self contained residential accommodation. Given the nature of the accommodation the proposal is not considered to trigger an affordable housing contribution in this case. Similarly an education contribution is not being sought in this case as the development would not result in an educational need in the same manner as a conventional housing development would.

## **7. Conclusion**

7.1 Staff consider that the proposed conversion of the upper floors of the building to residential use is acceptable in principle. The proposal would create 85 individual rooms with ensuite bathrooms and shared kitchen facilities. Members are invited to exercise their judgement in respect of the quality of the living environment which would be created for prospective occupiers. Staff are of the view that the proposal is acceptable given that the rooms would be for short term let and would be sold as permanent self contained accommodation. The proposed development would not make any provision for amenity space within the scheme however the applicant has agreed to a financial contribution of £30k towards tree planting and landscaping improvement works within the local area. The proposed extensions and alterations to the building are considered to be acceptable and would acceptably preserve the character and appearance of the Romford Conservation Area. The proposal does not raise any amenity or highways issues. Subject to the completion of a legal agreement to prevent future occupiers from obtaining resident parking permits the lack of parking within the scheme is considered to be acceptable. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with the aims and objectives of the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document and approval is recommended accordingly.

**IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

**Financial implications and risks:**

None.

**Legal implications and risks:**

Legal resources will be required for the drafting of a legal agreement.

**Human Resources implications and risks:**

None.

**Equalities implications and risks:**

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

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Application form, plans, a heritage statement and a design and access statement received on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010.