



# REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

17 May 2012

# REPORT

**Subject Heading:**

**P0295.12 – Upper floors of Quadrant Arcade, Market Place, Romford**

**Extension to third floor, alteration to window on side elevations and conversion of first, second and third floor from retail and office use to form a 65 bedroom hotel. (Application received 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012)**

**Report Author and contact details:**

**Helen Oakerbee (Planning Control Manager) 01708 432800**

**Policy context:**

**Local Development Framework  
London Plan  
National Planning Policy**

**Financial summary:**

**None**

**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 a 65 bedroom hotel. 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 financial contribution towards environmental improvements in the Market Place. 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 financial contribution of £10,000 to be used towards environmental improvements in the market place.
- 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's reasonable legal costs associated with the agreement irrespective of whether the agreement is completed.

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 accord 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 the proposed bricks for the roof extension, and the flank parapet 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. 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.

9. 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.

10. Sound insulation – Before the use commences, the building shall be insulated in accordance with a scheme which shall previously have been approved 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'.

11. New plant or machinery – Before any works commence a scheme for any new plant or machinery to be installed shall be submitted to the local planning authority to achieve the following standard. Noise levels expressed as the equivalent continuous sound level LAeq (1 hour) when calculated at the boundary with the nearest noise sensitive premises shall not exceed LA90 – 10dB and shall be maintained thereafter 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'.

12. 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.

13. Odours and odorous material – Before the use commences suitable equipment for the removal and/or disperse odours and odorous material should be fitted in accordance with a scheme to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the equipment shall be properly maintained and operated during normal working hours.

Reason: To protect the amenity of occupiers of nearby premises

14. Noise and vibration – Before the use commences a scheme to control the transmission of noise and vibration from any mechanical ventilation system installed shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and implemented prior to the permitted use commencing. Thereafter, the equipment shall be properly maintained and operated during normal working hours.

Reason: To protect the amenity of occupiers of nearby premises

15. Brick Cleaning – Before any work commences a method statement for the brick cleaning shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A sample patch shall be inspected on site and approved in writing prior to work commencing. The bricks shall be cleaned 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.

16. Pointing detail – Before any work commences a sample of all new pointing shall be inspected on site and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

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.

17. Neon lighting scheme – Before any work commences details of the proposed neon lighting scheme shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

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.

18. Linear projection feature - Full details of any repairs or restoration of the linear projecting feature above the main entrance to the arcade should be submitted prior to the commencement of any works, other than removing the green 'Primark' signage. Thereafter the repairs or restoration shall be carried out in strict 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.

19. New canopy and external door – Full details of the of the proposed new canopy and external door shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of the work. The works shall be implemented 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.

## **INFORMATIVES**

1. In aiming to satisfy condition 7 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 CP4, CP9, CP15, CP17, DC14, DC32, DC33, DC34, DC36, DC40, DC55, DC61, DC63, 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, 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 2.15, 4.5, 4.7, 6.1, 6.10, 6.13, 7.3, 7.4, 7.8 and 8.3 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 first, 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 a 65 bedroom hotel.
- 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 eleven new window openings are proposed.



- 2.4 The application proposes the conversion of the first, second and third floors of the building to form a hotel. 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 65 no. hotel rooms with en-suite shower rooms over the three floors. Each room would measure a minimum of 15m<sup>2</sup> and has been designed in line with industry standards. The hotel will have 18 rooms on the first floor, 26 on the second floor and 21 on the third floor. The hotel also incorporates a reception area and café/bar and back of house office and service space at first floor.
- 2.5 Access to the building would be via a new hotel entrance and dedicated staircase leading out onto the front elevation fronting the Market Place. The proposed entrance is sufficiently wide for wheelchair users who can enter into the internal lobby and proceed to the hotel reception via the lift.
- 2.6 No parking spaces are associated with the hotel proposal as a result of its central town centre location.
- 2.7 Alterations are made at ground floor level to form a new enclosed bin store adjacent to the rear fire escape staircase (CORE 3) to be used by the Hotel and emptied along with other rubbish from the Arcade. The bin store will hold 4 no. 1100 litre bins. One of these would be for recyclables and the other 3 for mixed waste. The applicant has indicated that the bins will be in the same location as the existing Arcade bins and hence will be collected by the Council.

### **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

P1184.10 - 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. en-suite bedrooms with shared kitchen facilities - Refused

### **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 has stated that access for fire fighting vehicles is required to 15% of the perimeter for buildings with a top floor level up to 11m above ground level and to 50% of the perimeter for buildings with a level over 11m above ground level. Each elevation to which access is provided must have a door giving access to the interior of the building. Confirmation should be provided to the Fire Authority that the above can be met.
- 4.3 English Heritage raises no comments and recommends that the application should be determined in accordance with adopted policy and guidance.
- 4.4 The Borough Crime Prevention Design Advisor raises no objection subject to the imposition of planning conditions covering the submission of a Secure by Design application and a management statement.

**5. Relevant Policies**

5.1 LDF Core Strategy Development Plan Document

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  
ROM17 – Greening Romford  
ROM20 – Urban design  
ROM21 – Public spaces

5.3 LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document

DC14 – Hotels  
DC32 – The road network  
DC33 – Car parking  
DC34 – Walking  
DC36 – Servicing  
DC40 – Waste recycling  
DC55 – Noise  
DC61 – Urban design  
DC63 – Delivering safer places  
DC68 – Conservation areas  
DC72 – Planning Obligations

5.4 The London Plan

- 2.15 – Town centres
- 4.5 – London’s visitor infrastructure
- 4.7 – Retail and town centre development
- 6.1 – Strategic approach
- 6.10 – Walking
- 6.13 – Parking
- 7.3 – Designing out crime
- 7.4 – Local character
- 7.8 – Heritage assets and archaeology
- 8.3 – Community infrastructure levy

5.5 Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework

**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 a hotel rather than individual self contained flats.

6.1.2 A similar more recent application (reference P1184.10) for the 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. en-suite bedrooms with shared kitchen facilities was refused planning permission. Concerns related to poor quality of living environment; type of occupation would lead to activity that would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the building and Romford Conservation Area; nature and density of occupation likely to lead to anti-social behaviour; unsatisfactory storage and collection arrangements and a lack of suitable provision for emergency services. This current application differs however in that internally part of the building would be converted to form a hotel rather than shared residential accommodation.

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 a 64 bed hotel. 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 an earlier application (reference P1184.10).

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 hotel use to the upper floors of the building. Policy DC14 states that Romford is the preferred location for large scale hotel development. The proposal is not only in line with current policy guidelines but will also strengthen the wider role of the Romford town centre and provide a range of employment opportunities.

6.2.5 Policy 4.5 of the London Plan supports and encourages development of good quality budget category hotels, especially in outer London.

6.2.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises town centres as the heart of their communities and encourages Local Authorities to pursue policies to support their viability and vitality. The NPPF also encourages Local Authorities to support development which facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport. The NPPF goes further to classify hotels as a main town centre use in Annex 2. There is, therefore, general support for the principle of providing hotel development within the Romford Town Centre.

### 6.3 Layout

6.3.1 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 by means of a staircase and lift. Internally the layout

of each floor would in most cases comprise of a central corridor with individual rooms to either side. A reception, kitchen and Cafe area would be provided on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.

6.3.2 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 hotel rooms. The applicant has however indicated that the smallest room would measure 15m<sup>2</sup> which is based upon Travelodge space planning guidance. The proposal would also provide 7 wheelchair accessible bedrooms which is in line with Policy 4.5 of the London Plan which requires 10% of hotel rooms to be wheelchair accessible. 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.

6.3.3 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. The rooms to the western side of the building 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 some rooms would solely have from windows facing into a proposed internal light well.

6.3.4 Staff consider the current arrangement in terms of outlook and layout to be acceptable given the proposed hotel use. Also, previous reasons for refusal relating to poor quality of living environment are no longer valid given the proposed hotel use as opposed to the provision of private residential units.

6.3.8 There is no need to provide amenity space within a development of the nature proposed. 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 £10k towards town centre improvements which could be secured via legal agreement in the event that Members are minded to grant planning permission

#### 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. 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.

6.5 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 the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should take account of: the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 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. 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.

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 the NPPF.

#### 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 hotel. 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 hotel use.

6.7.2 The proposed hotel 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 hotel 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 NPPF, the London Plan and Policy DC2 staff consider it would be acceptable for no parking provision to be made for staff or customers. The site is located in close proximity to the railway station, several main bus stops and public car parks.

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.

**7. The Mayor's Community Infrastructure Levy**

The proposed development is liable for the Mayor's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in accordance with London Plan Policy 8.3. The applicable fee is based on an internal gross floor area of 222m<sup>2</sup> and amounts to £4440.

**8. Conclusion**

8.1 Staff consider that the proposed conversion of the upper floors of the building to hotel use is acceptable in principle. The proposal would create 65 hotel rooms with en-suite bathrooms and is considered acceptable given the presumption in favour of hotel development in the Romford Town Centre. 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. The applicant has agreed to a financial contribution of £10k towards environmental improvements in the market place. Subject to the completion of a legal agreement 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 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012.