

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250597
Site Address:	18-32 London Road, Twyford, RG10 9ER
Expiry Date:	8 August 2025
Site Visit Date:	7 May 2025
Proposal: Full application for proposed raising of the existing roof to form 2No. 2-bedroom apartments, with sub-division of two existing two- bedroom first floor apartments to form 4No. 1-bedroom apartments together with associated works including parking and cycle storage provision following demolition of existing outbuildings.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Twyford Conservation Area
Within setting of Grade II* Listed The Harrison Almshouses & Grade II Listed Apsley House
Major Development Location – Twyford
Twyford Town Centre
Primary Shopping Area
Primary Shopping Frontage
Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Groundwater Nitrate Vulnerable Zone
District Town and Local Centres
Radon Affected Area
Landscape Character Assessment Area

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	CP1 – Sustainable Development CP3 – General Principles for Development CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability CP6 – Managing Travel Demand CP7 – Biodiversity CP9 – Scale and Location of Development Proposals CP13 – Town Centres and Shopping CP17 – Housing Delivery
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC06 – Noise CC07 – Parking CC09 – Development and Flood Risk

	CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB05 – Housing Mix TB15 – Major Town, and Small Town/District Centre development TB16 – Development for Town Centre Uses TB17 – Local Centres and Neighbourhood and Village Shops TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (JMWP)	The JMWP does not apply to the proposed development.
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List Twyford Neighbourhood Plan

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
223577	Full application for raising of the roof to create additional habitable accommodation, to form 2no. 2 bed apartments together with associated works including the erection of dormer windows, parking and cycle storage provision following demolition of existing outbuildings	Conditionally Approved – 26/07/2023 (Not Implemented)
200795	Full planning application for the proposed erection of garage/storage units to the rear of 18-32 London Road following demolition of existing garage/storage units.	Conditionally Approved – 17/06/2020 (Not Implemented)
R/338/66	Proposed erection of 5 shops with 3 flats over.	Conditionally Approved – 24/11/1966
O/142/64	Outline application for shops with flats over.	Conditionally Approved – 09/07/1964

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health: No objection
WBC Drainage: Request further information prior to determination
WBC Highways: Request further information prior to determination
WBC Landscape and Trees: Request further information prior to determination
WBC Public Rights Of Way: No comments received
WBC Built Heritage Officer: Object on the following grounds: 'is considered to cause "less than substantial harm" to the significance of a number of designated heritage

assets.'
WBC CIL: Advice on CIL matters
WBC Cleaner and Greener: No comments received
WBC Ecology Newts: No objection
WBC Ecology: No objection subject to condition
External
Natural England: No comments received
Thames Water Utilities Ltd: No comments received

REPRESENTATIONS

Parish/Town Council	Twyford Parish Council object on the following grounds: - Insufficient parking provision including visitor parking - Cumulative impact of additional traffic and resultant on-street parking, could block pedestrian access <i>Officer's Comment: These concerns are discussed in the 'Highway Access and Parking Provision' section of the report.</i>
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	1 comment received objecting on the following grounds: - Potential overlooking impact into adjacent front garden. <i>Officer's Comment: This is discussed in the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of the report.</i> - Access and disruption during the development: <i>Officer's Comment: This is not a material planning consideration, the granting of planning permission does not obviate the need for compliance with the requirements of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.</i> - Impact on mature trees within the curtilage of 16 London Road. <i>Officer's Comment: This is discussed in the 'Landscape and Trees' section of the report.</i> - Impact of the proposed development on neighbouring listed buildings and the character of the area. <i>Officer's Comment: This is discussed in the 'Design and Character of the Area' and 'Impact on Designated Heritage Assets' sections of the report.</i> - Proposed removal of outbuildings would partially remove the boundary wall adjoining 16 London Road. <i>Officer's Comment: This is discussed in the 'Neighbouring Amenity' section of the report.</i> 1 comment received querying whether the service road will be reinstated to a reasonable state following the development. <i>Officer's Comment: This is a civil matter between the applicant and other interested parties and is not a material planning consideration.</i>

APPRAISAL

Site Description:

The application site is a two storey 1960s mixed use building comprising commercial/retail units on the ground floor with 3no. residential flats above within Twyford Village Centre. The site also comprises a mainly hard landscaped area to the rear of the building which serves as a service yard and parking for the units including a row of garages adjacent to the south-western boundary.

The site lies within Twyford Conservation Area with Grade II* Listed Harrison Almshouses adjacent to the north-eastern boundary and Grade II Listed Welford Cottage adjacent to the south-western boundary. Directly opposite the site is Grade II Listed Apsley House.

Proposal:

This application proposes raising the roof of the main building by 1.5 metres and the erection of dormer windows to create 2no. additional 2 bedroom units within the loft space, plus the subdivision of the existing first floor 2no. 2 bedroom units to create resulting in a 2 and a half storey building with associated landscaping, parking and cycle storage following the demolition of the existing garages at the rear.

In respect of the proposed external alterations to the site, with the exception of minor fenestration changes there are no material differences to the scheme approved under application ref 223577. The main difference with the current proposal is that it also includes the subdivision of the existing first floor units to create 4no. 1 bedroom units.

Principle of Development:

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Act requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the Local Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy (CS) 2010 and Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan 2014. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must also be considered as it constitutes guidance which the Local Planning Authority must pay regard to, however it does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan as the starting point for decision making. However, the NPPF is a material consideration in any determination and must be read alongside the Development Plan.

Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map. The site is located within a major development location and as such the principle of development should be acceptable subject to other material considerations.

The site falls within a small town/district centre as designated by Core Strategy policy CP13 and MDD Local Plan policy TB15 and is a primary shopping frontage as defined by policy TB15. These policies seek to maintain the vitality and viability of retail centres and proposals will only be granted permission where they demonstrate that they are of a scale and form compatible with the retail character of the centre, should contribute to the provision of day as well as evening/night-time uses and should enhance vitality and viability.

The proposed development would provide 4no. additional residential flats within the

retail centre while not affecting the provision of the existing commercial units on the ground floor. Additional residential population within the retail centre would support the use, vitality and viability of the retail and other uses within Twyford village centre. The proposal therefore complies with the aforementioned policies.

Housing Land Supply

To achieve sustainable development, the NPPF (February 2025) at paragraph 78 requires LPAs to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than 5 years old. The latest published Five-Year Housing Land Supply Statement (at 31st March 2025) shows the Council is currently only able to demonstrate 2.5 years' worth of deliverable sites. Subsequently, policies relating specifically to housing development within the Local Development Plan are currently considered to be out of date. However, this does not mean that they have no weight.

Paragraph 11 states that where policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:

- i. the application of policies in the Framework that protect assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

Firstly, in considering i), the site falls within a Conservation Area which is an area or asset of particular importance (as outlined in footnote 7 of paragraph 11), meaning that the proposal must be assessed against NPPF policies relating to Conservation Areas. This required assessment is given in the 'Impact on Designated Heritage Assets' section of the report. However, the proposal must also be considered under ii) to determine whether there are any adverse impacts generated by the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This is referred to as the 'tilted balance', as harms and benefits are not weighed equally, but tilted against any adverse impacts.

An important underlying reason in the context of Wokingham Borough is the historic oversupply of housing against both the requirement set out in the Core Strategy local plan and the scale of local housing need as calculated by the previous standard method which remains a key contributing factor to the current lack of the required deliverable housing land supply, and this must be considered in the planning balance.

Having established the tilted balance is engaged, paragraph 11(d)(ii) requires the proposal to be considered against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable

homes, individually or in combination. These key policies, as outlined within footnote 9, will be referred to throughout this response letter where relevant, with the balance required by paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF given in the 'Planning Balance and Conclusion' section.

Sustainability

Policies CP1, CP4, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport.

In this instance, the site is located within settlement limits within a major development location and is acceptable in terms of the principles stated in the Core Strategy. It also accords with the relevant policies in the MDD Local Plan. In terms of sustainability, the site is in an excellent location. It is within walking distance of Twyford Station Area (approx. 250 metres), bus stops immediately adjacent to the site on London Road serving Reading, Wokingham and High Wycombe as well as good access to pedestrian and cycle links. On this basis, there are no sustainability concerns with the proposal.

Design and Character of the Area:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale, mass, layout, built form, height and character of the area and must be of high quality design. R1 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that development contribute positively towards and be compatible with the historic or underlying character and quality of the local area.

The site is located at the heart of Twyford which comprises a mixture of Listed Buildings of varying design and scale dating as far back as the 16th Century and 1960s/1970s development which are of a contrasting appearance with the application site of a poorer appearance compared to other prominent buildings on the street scene. Overall, there is little architectural uniformity to the village centre.

The most significant proposed change is the raising of the roof which would increase the total ridge height of the building by 1.6 metres, from approximately 9.0 metres to 10.6 metres. The eastern end of the building, which is dropped down from the main ridgeline and appears as an extension, would not be raised. Following discussions with the applicant, a revised proposed elevations plan has been submitted which confirms that there are no material differences from the extant permission (ref 223577) in respect of the roof extension and other external alterations with the exception of minor fenestration changes at first floor level.

The village centre comprises various roof forms ranging from flat roofs, gables and crowned while buildings are predominantly two or two and a half storeys tall although there are examples of three storey development towards the western end. While a significant change to the existing building, the creation of an additional half storey would not be out of character with the area and the raised ridge height would not exceed the roofline established by the three storey buildings.

The proposed external materials would be in keeping with the existing building. This

would sufficiently mitigate the visual impact of the proposal softening the appearance of the more visually prominent roof while ensuring that the proposal as a whole does not introduce any adverse harm to visual amenity. The visual impact would be further mitigated by the proposed replacement of the weathered rendering at the front and the removal of all surface wiring and mounted equipment above the shop fronts. To ensure that the proposed external materials are acceptable a condition is recommended requiring the submission of further details prior to commencement.

The proposal also comprises the erection of 4no. dormer windows at the front, 4no. dormer windows at the rear and the insertion 3no. rooflights at the rear which would sit below the existing ridge height to serve the new residential units. While the dormers would be a new addition to the existing building there are various examples of dormers fronting the street scene so this would not be out of character. Moreover, the dormers are of a relatively modest size and scale and would not detract from the appearance of the existing building. This is highlighted by their uniform symmetry which is line with the proposed replacement fenestration at first floor level. To facilitate the proposed first floor units, fenestration changes including additional doors are proposed on the rear elevation which are in keeping with the size of the existing fenestration.

Overall, while the proposal would be a significant change to the existing building, its scale and size is appropriate in relation to the form of the site and the mixed character of Twyford Village Centre. The visual impact of the proposal would be sufficiently mitigated through the use of complementary external materials and improvements to the existing façade particularly at first floor level. Moreover, there would be no additional impact over and above the extant planning permission for the site. The proposal would therefore have an acceptable impact on visual amenity and local character in compliance with Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 in this respect.

Impact on Designated Heritage Assets:

Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan outlines that the Council will conserve and seek to enhance the designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by supporting development proposals that will conserve the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

The application site falls partially within Twyford Conservation Area, although the existing building falls fully within the area, which is a designated heritage asset. The proposal would also affect the setting of the adjacent Grade II* Listed Harrison Almshouses and Grade II Listed Welford Cottage (16 London Road) as well as Grade II Listed Apsley House opposite.

The existing building is considered to have a limited negative to neutral impact on the

Conservation Area and the setting of the neighbouring listed buildings due to its low quality of design and external materials compared to the more traditional buildings within the village centre. This is further highlighted by its prominent position on the high street frontage.

There are no material differences from the extant permission in terms of proposed external alterations. The Council's Built Heritage Officer has reviewed the current proposal and considers that it still fails to address the principal concerns of the scheme aesthetically in terms of massing and change of form within the site's historic setting. The Officer, in their response to the extant permission, concluded that despite agreed amendments to the scheme which have also been included within the current proposal (in terms of materials and fenestration), these failed to offset the harm arising from the raising of the roof.

In conclusion, the proposal would amount to less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that where a proposal would amount to less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use.

Notwithstanding the identified harm, the proposal is acceptable in principle. It would result in the creation of four additional residential units within settlement limits in a highly sustainable location. This in turn would support the vitality and viability of Twyford's role as a retail centre, with no impact on the existing commercial units within the site. There are clear public benefits to the scheme, and these will be balanced against the identified harm to the significance of designated heritage assets in the 'Planning Balance and Conclusion' section of the report.

Dwelling Mix:

Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy requires an appropriate mix of dwelling types, tenures and sizes so that the housing needs of the community are met. Policy TB05 of the MDD Local Plan requires an appropriate housing mix which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and both the current and projected needs of households. The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (February 2016) identified future housing need for the Wokingham Borough with 66% of all dwellings to be 3+ bedrooms.

In addition to the approved 2no. 2 bedroom, 3 person units approved under the extant permission, the proposal would create 4no. 1 bedroom, 2 person units through the subdivision of the existing 2no. first floor units (net gain of 4no. residential units).

While there is a departure from the identified future housing need for larger dwellings, the proposed dwelling mix complements the underlying character of the area with Twyford village centre largely comprising largely 2-3 bedroom flats and houses. Moreover, smaller residential units including 1 bedroom flats play an important role in meeting a wider housing need as required by policy CP5.

The proposal relates to a small site so opportunities for more a more varied mix are limited. Moreover, smaller unit schemes such as flats are considered as appropriate

within town and village centres where development is denser than the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposed dwelling mix is acceptable.

Residential Amenity:

Internal Amenity:

Policy TB07 of the MDD Local Plan and R17 of the Borough Design Guide SPD require adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size of new dwellings achieves good internal amenity. In accordance with the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard, a minimum standard of 50m² applies for a 1 storey, 1 bedroom, 2 person occupancy dwelling, and a minimum standard of 61m² applies for a 1 storey, 2 bedroom, 3 person occupancy dwelling.

All proposed units would meet these minimum standards, with the bedroom sizes also meeting the minimum space standards of 11.5m² for a double and 7.5m² for a single. Appropriate storage and living space is also proposed and the proposed first floor and second floor fenestration on the northern and southern elevations of the building would allow sufficient daylight into all habitable rooms. Therefore, the level of internal amenity as proposed is acceptable.

External Amenity:

While private or communal external amenity space such as a shared garden space is not proposed, this does not constitute a worsening of the existing arrangement. Nevertheless, there is generally less expectation of outdoor amenity space within town or village centre locations, and there are opportunities for recreation and outdoor space in close proximity to the site, with both King George's Field and Stanlake Meadow Recreation Ground circa. 350 metres walking distance from the site and smaller public amenity spaces within closer proximity including Springfield Park. On this basis, it is considered that the scheme affords adequate external amenity for future occupiers.

Neighbouring Amenity:

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy aims to protect neighbouring amenity and R23 of the Borough Design Guide SPD requires that extensions relate to neighbouring properties.

Overlooking: The application site does not have a direct back to back relationship with any neighbouring residential dwellings. However, due to the differences in orientation the site does have an indirect back to front relationship with No.16 London Road adjacent to the south-western boundary. Concern was raised about overlooking into the private amenity space fronting this adjacent property.

Given the limited fenestration changes proposed at first floor level the proposed creation of 4no. 1 bedroom units would not change the existing relationship between these sites. At second floor level, to prevent direct outlook onto the neighbouring amenity space from 'Flat 5' rooflights are proposed to serve the closest habitable rooms to the shared boundary. This would sufficiently prevent direct overlooking from these rooms onto the adjoining garden.

Regarding the other proposed dormer windows at the rear, these would have a similar outlook from the existing fenestration at first floor level with an oblique view of the neighbourhood rather than direct outlook into residential gardens. At the front the proposed dormer windows would also achieve an oblique view of the neighbourhood with the existing separation distance from buildings facing the application site retained.

Loss of Light and Overbearing: Due to the scale of the proposal and the existing significant separation distances from the raised roof and adjacent buildings being retained, there are no concerns relating to potential loss of light or overbearing impact.

The proposed demolition of the garages at the rear of the site would have a positive impact on the amenity of No.16 London Road, however it is unclear from the submitted drawings whether the existing boundary wall could be retained, or if new boundary treatment is proposed. To ensure no harm in this respect, as well as the character of the area, a condition requiring the submission of, and agreement to, further details on boundary treatment prior to commencement is recommended.

Highway Access and Parking Provision:

Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan set out the parking standards for development, noting that these should be regarded as a starting point with each site assessed on its own merits. P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces are to be a minimum of 5m x 2.5m. P3 of the Borough Design Guide SPD notes that parking spaces should be safe and convenient, close to the dwelling and sited to minimise impact upon safety.

The proposal would utilise the existing vehicular access to the hard landscaped area at the rear of the site off The Grove. The Council's Highways Officer has raised no objection to this existing arrangement being retained for the four additional units.

Concern has been raised in respect of the parking provision, the proposal would create two additional parking spaces resulting in a total of 9 spaces (7 allocated and 2 unallocated). The Highways Officer has raised no objection to this arrangement concluding that it would meet the Council's Parking Standards and be an improvement from the existing provision. Following the development each (existing and proposed) dwelling would benefit from one allocated space with the two unallocated spaces also meeting the Council's standards. As such, the proposal would comply with policy CC07.

To promote sustainable transport modes for future occupiers, a new cycle storage shed is proposed adjacent towards the south-eastern corner of the site. The Officer supports this provision in principle but has noted that further provision will need to be provided to accommodate all residential units following the development (minimum of 1 space per unit). To address this requirement the applicant has agreed to submit further information prior to the commencement of the development. This is secured by the recommended condition.

The Highways Officer has also requested that EV charging provision is also indicated at this stage. However, as this is a requirement under the 2023 Building Regulations S it would be onerous to require these details to be provided prior to the determination of this planning application.

Subject to further details on cycle storage being submitted and agreed in writing prior to the occupation of the new units, the proposal would comply with Core Strategy policy CP6 and MDD Local Plan policy CC07.

Flooding and Drainage:

Policy CC09 of the MDD Local Plan requires consideration of flood risk from historic flooding and policy CC10 requires sustainable drainage methods and the minimisation of surface water flow. The site falls within Flood Zone 1 however Environment Agency data indicates that the site is not prone to surface water flooding and the proposal represents no additional flood risk or vulnerability.

The Council's Flood Risk and Drainage Officer has raised no objection to the principle of the development but requested further information relating to the existing impermeable area to the rear of the site and whether the demolished outbuildings would create any additional impermeable areas. The applicant has confirmed that the existing yard is predominantly impermeable and that there would be a very marginal reduction in impermeable area following the demolition of the existing outbuildings. The submitted plans indicate that this is correct.

Given that the site is previously developed land located within Flood Zone 1, the proposed units can connect into the existing drainage system serving the site, and there is no increase in footprint proposed, no further information is required to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in increased surface water flood risk.

Landscape and Trees:

Policy CC03 of the MDD Local Plan aims to protect green infrastructure networks, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping and Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character.

There are no existing trees and very limited soft landscaping within the site's boundaries however there are a few trees adjacent to the south western boundary within the curtilage of No.16 London Road. These are not protected by a Tree Preservation Order however they are afforded a level of protection due to falling within a Conservation Area. These contribute to public amenity when traversing this part of London Road and in accordance with policy CC03 should be protected and retained following the development.

The proposed works including the demolition of the existing garage at the rear of the site could impact on these trees without sufficient protection. Due to the trees falling outside of the site's curtilage there is a current lack of information regarding the impact of the development on the trees (which would ordinarily be demonstrated via an Arboricultural Impact Assessment). The applicant has agreed to submit an Arboricultural Method Statement prior to the commencement of the development.

Given the circumstances and that tree protection measures have been agreed in principle, it is considered appropriate to grant consent subject to further information being submitted pre-commencement in this instance.

Ecology:

Paragraph 174 of the NPPF is clear that new development should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by minimising impact on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires that development protects existing wildlife and biodiversity, with particular consideration to protected species. The site is within the amber risk zone for Great Crested Newts and within an area where bat roosts have been observed.

A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, November 2022) submitted with the previous application concluded that the building had moderate bat roost potential and recommended further surveys be carried out to confirm if bats are roosting in the existing roof. At the request of Officers these surveys were carried out prior to the determination of the extant permission in May and June 2023 with no bats observed emerging from the site (John Wenman Ecological Consultancy, June 2023). The Council's Ecology Officer is satisfied that no up to date surveys are required prior to the determination of this application.

The Council's Ecology Officers have reviewed these reports and the submitted plans and are satisfied that the proposal is unlikely to result in bat roosts being damaging or lead to bats being disturbed. They have also assessed the potential impact on Great Crested Newts and concluded that this risk is very low, as there are no ponds within 250m of the site and there is poor connectivity with suitable habitat in the surrounding landscape. Subsequently there are no ecology objections to the proposal.

There is very limited scope within the application site for enhanced soft landscaping, however the proposed built form could incorporate biodiversity enhancement measures such as bird and/or bat boxes. To ensure that the proposal complies with the aforementioned policies the submission of, and agreement to, a biodiversity enhancement strategy prior to the occupation of the development is secured by the recommended condition.

Planning Balance and Conclusion:

The starting point for decision making is the development plan. However, as set out in the Principle of Development section of this response letter, paragraph 11d(ii) of the NPPF is engaged and this also requires the proposal to be considered against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole. The tilted balance does not however displace the primacy of the development plan.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF sets out that achieving sustainable development means that development should satisfy three overarching objectives in relation to economic, social and environmental benefits.

Economically the proposed development would enable job creation during the construction period although this would be very limited given the scale of the

development. The proposal would also create four additional dwellings at the heart of the settlement, supporting the vitality and viability of Twyford's role as a retail centre. This holds moderate weight in the tilted balance.

Regarding the **social** role the development would perform the provision of four dwellings in this location would not make a significant contribution to the Council's housing land supply position. However, the provision of smaller dwellings would contribute positively to the dwelling mix within the settlement and is compatible with the underlying character of the area. This holds moderate weight in the tilted balance.

Regarding its **environmental** role, the proposal would see residential development on previously developed land in a highly sustainable location with very good accessibility to local amenities and services as well as various modes of transport. No adverse ecological impact has been identified with biodiversity enhancement measures secured for the site post development. This holds limited weight in the tilted balance.

As discussed in the 'Impact on Designated Heritage Assets' section of the report, less than substantial harm has been identified in relation to impact on the significance of Twyford Conservation Area and the setting of adjacent Grade II* Listed Harrison Almshouses. In accordance with Paragraph 215 of the NPPF, this harm must be weighted against the public benefits of the proposal including where it would secure the optimum viable use of the site.

The proposal is acceptable in principle, with four additional residential units provided within the village centre with notable social and economic benefits identified. Of significance would be the proposal's contribution to the vitality and viability of Twyford's role as a retail centre. The proposal would also secure additional benefits for the existing occupiers of the building with improved vehicle and cycle parking provision, and the commercial units on the ground floor would be retained.

While the raising of the roof is a significant change to the existing building, it is overall relatively modest in terms of size and scale with no adverse harm to the general character of the area identified. More details on the proposed external materials must be agreed prior to the commencement of the development to ensure that they are complementary, while the building as a whole will be refurbished to improve its overall appearance. It is also noted that the proposed alterations to the existing building is significantly more sustainable than a scheme requiring the demolition of the building and even temporary loss of the ground floor commercial units.

On balance, it is considered that the public benefits of the scheme outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets with enhanced benefits resulting from increasing the provision of residential flats through alterations to the existing building. When applying weight to the economic, social and environmental benefits of the scheme, no adverse harm has been identified which would significantly and adversely outweigh the identified benefits as required by paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

Therefore, the proposal represents an acceptable outcome for the site and is recommended for **approval** subject to conditions.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Yes
Recommendation:	Approve
Date:	5 August 2025
Earliest date for decision:	3 May 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	6 August 2025