



**9 CRESCENT ROAD
WOKINGHAM**

PLANNING & HERITAGE STATEMENT

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF THE GROUND FLOOR FROM COMMERCIAL UNIT TO CREATE ONE NEW 1 BED APARTMENT (C3)

JANUARY 2026

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 No.9 Crescent Road is a three-storey property, originally designed as a single dwelling. Council records suggest that in 1974 permission was granted to subdivide the house to create three flats but soon after this in 1975 a permission was granted to change the ground floor to commercial use as a dental surgery. It has subsequently operated as a vets practice and more latterly a beauty salon.
- 1.2 Planning permission is now sought to change the use of the ground floor space to residential in the form of a one-bedroom apartment. This would reinstate the three flat arrangement originally approved in 1974. The existing flats at first and second floor level remain unchanged by this application. No external alterations to the building are proposed.
- 1.3 The property is not a listed building, but it does stand within the Murdoch Road Conservation Area, is of pleasant appearance and can be considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of Crescent Road and so the wider Conservation Area.
- 1.4 This Planning & Heritage Statement provides an analysis of the heritage significance of the property, the impacts of the proposed change of use upon the asset and explains why in the context of relevant national and local planning policies it is considered that planning permission should be granted. It is set out as follows:
 - 2.0 Site & Heritage Description
 - 3.0 Planning History
 - 4.0 Planning Policy
 - 5.0 Analysis
 - 6.0 Conclusions

2.0 SITE & HERITAGE DESCRIPTION

2.1 No.9 is situated at the northern end of Crescent Road with its frontage facing east and rear facing west over a generous garden space.

2.2 Whilst the area benefits from a quiet residential character it is very conveniently located just to the east of the town centre square which is a walk of just 250m as shown opposite.

2.3 The building includes a double gable frontage with the northern (right side) gable projected forward of the southern (left) side.



Aerial photograph showing the application site in context and walk to the main town square

2.4 As shown in the following photographs the neighbouring properties to the south of No.9 are of a similar double gable fronted appearance. Directly to the north there is a larger flatted block with car parking at the rear. This appears to be of 1950's / 1960's design and whilst it does not positively detract from the area it is at best a neutral building.

2.5 There are a number of frontage trees within Crescent Road which provide a pleasant softening of the built form when viewed along the road.



Aerial view from the front showing the property and direct neighbours



Aerial view from the rear looking back across the garden at the rear of the building



Street view looking north along the site frontage.



Street view looking south across the frontage

2.6 The property benefits from a vehicular access driveway to the north side and there is a garage / outbuilding set approximately halfway into the rear garden as highlighted opposite.



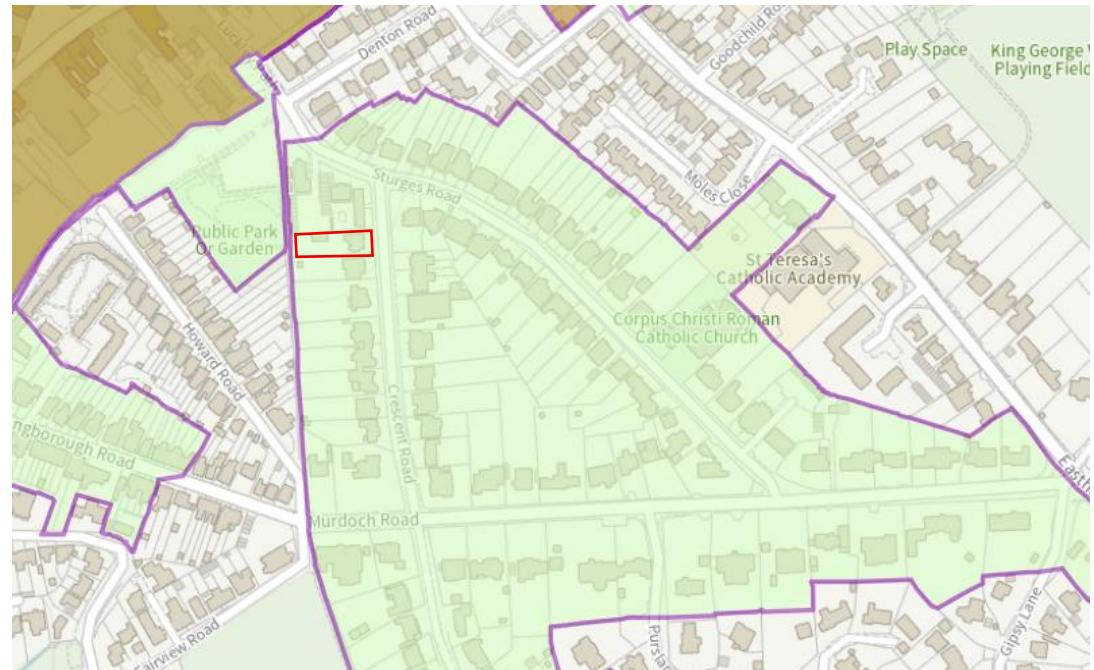
Aerial view showing the rear garage building

2.7 The southern and western site boundaries are well landscaped and there is a fencing and further landscaping to the north side of the garden which provides a reasonable degree of separation and so privacy between the garden and the car parking area for the adjacent flats.

2.8 The property stands toward the northern edge of the Murdoch Road Conservation Area as designated by the Council in 2003.

2.9 The Conservation Area is highlighted green on the map extract opposite.

2.10 There are no listed buildings within Crescent Road with the nearest being located to the north and northwest within The Town Centre area. These are highlighted on the extract map on the following page taken from the Historic England map search system.



Conservation Area boundaries map with the application site added

2.11 McCoy Associates prepared an appraisal of the Conservation Area as part of its designation in 2003.

2.12 This explains that building work to create what is now Crescent Road began in 1899. It ponders:

“...Why a straight street should have been called Crescent Road is a conundrum.....”

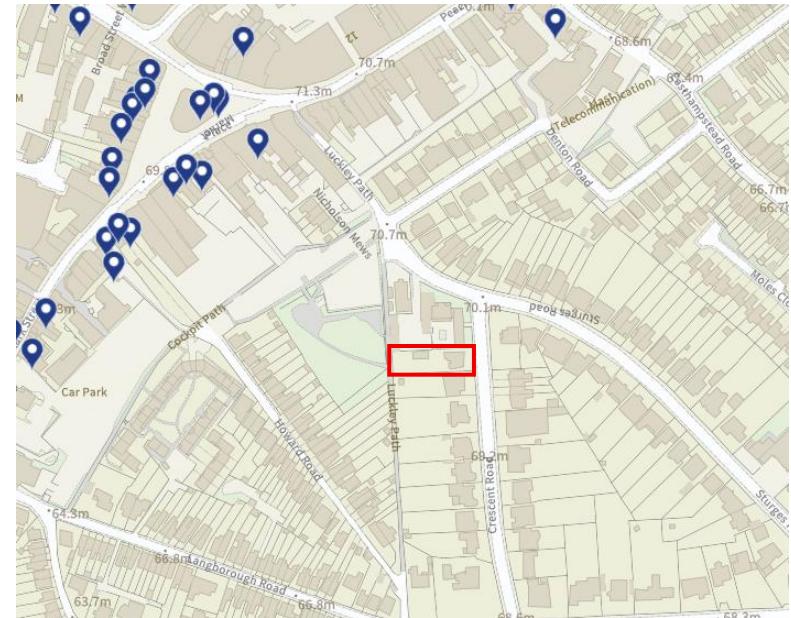
2.13 The Appraisal suggests that Crescent Road may be viewed as one of the lesser streets within the Conservation Area with the most important buildings being those on the south side of Murdoch Road, most of which were designed by the locally important family firm of architects and builders Morris & Sons.

2.14 The Appraisal highlights the value of the spacious nature of the roads within the Conservation Area and that:

“Looking south down Crescent Roadthe views are terminated by large trees. Other views out of the area are less notable..

Gables of different sizes, often on the same building and set back to different degrees, are used to good effect to create a rich skyline. Generous overhanging eaves add to the character off many of the buildings.”

2.15 These aspects are clearly reflected along Crescent Road and at the application property.



Map extract showing the nearest listed building to the application site

Significance of the Conservation Area & No.9 Crescent Road

2.16 The Conservation Area primarily comprises residential buildings which date from the late 1800's and early 1900's. It holds historical significance in terms of its demonstration of the rapid expansion of the town during that period and the desire of the growing middle classes to own and live in grander houses with status. The low-density nature of the development with good quality open space and verdant avenues reflects this aspiration.

2.17 The Conservation Area also holds value in terms of its association with and links to the locally important family and architectural and building firm, Morris & Son, the arts and crafts movement and the principle of 'Garden City' development.

2.18 Although 9 Crescent Road is not noted in the Conservation Area as an unlisted building of merit or as one designed specifically by a member of the Morris family it follows and complements the general architectural style of the area including the doubled gabled front projections.

2.19 It is assessed that No.9 makes a positive contribution to the street scene within Crescent Road and the wider townscape of the Conservation Area. Its consistent form along side its neighbours to the south provides a small but coherent contribution to the quality of the wider Conservation Area.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Under planning reference 2045 the Council granted planning permission on 20 February 1974 to enable the subdivision of No.9 Crescent Road to create three flats (ground first and second).
- 3.2 Following this in 1975 permission was granted to allow the use of the ground floor as a dental surgery.
- 3.3 In 2002 reference 021936 permission was then granted for a two storey rear extension to form dental surgery on ground floor with dining room extension to the residential flat at first floor. Finally in 2005, reference 051509 permission was granted to enable the use of the dental surgery to change to that of a vets practice.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2024

4.1 The NPPF provides the government's guidance on the way in which the planning system should approach the delivery of sustainable new development. We highlight the following aspects.

- When taking decisions the Council should:
 - c) approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
 - d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
 - i the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong 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 this Framework taken as a whole, having 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 (P.11)
- Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way so that application for sustainable development can be approved wherever possible. (p.38)

- A key government objective is to significantly boost the supply of housing. (p.61)
- Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area (p.73)
- Local planning authorities should identify and update annually 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 (p.78)
- Planning decisions should promote the effective use of land in meeting housing requirements. (P.124)
- Planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land. (P.129 & 130)
- Planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the quality of an area, are visually attractive, sympathetic to character and maintain or establish a sense of place. (p.135)

4.2 Chapter 16 is entitled "Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment". It advises:

207. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.....

208. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

210. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

212. 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.

214. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Local Planning Policy

4.3 The Local Plan comprises the Core Strategy (2011) and Managing Development Delivery DPD (2014). Relevant current policies include:

Policy TB07: Internal Space Standards

1. Proposals for new residential units, including change of use or conversions, should ensure that the internal layout and size are suitable to serve the amenity requirements of future occupiers. The Council will assess all development proposals against the following minimum standards to ensure that the internal layout and size are suitable to serve the amenity requirements of future occupiers.

Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

1. Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas are shown on the Policies Map.
2. The Borough Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings by:
 - a. Requiring works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.
 - b. Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.
3. Proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme

Policy TB25: Archaeology

1. Areas of high archaeological potential are shown on the Policies Map.
2. In areas of high archaeological potential, applicants will need to provide a detailed assessment of the impact on archaeological remains.
3. Where development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains.

The Emerging Development Plan Review

4.4 The draft local plan that will replace the Core Strategy and Manging Development Delivery DPD. The following policies are considered relevant

Policy SS3: Development within or adjacent to major and modest settlements

1. Within major and modest settlements, development proposals in addition to those specifically identified as allocations or areas of change in this plan, will be supported in principle.

Policy H8: Conversion and sub-division of buildings

1. Development proposals for the conversion or sub-division of buildings into self-contained flats or houses of multiple occupation, or their subsequent extension, will be supported within defined settlements provided that all the following criteria are met:
 - a) The character and appearance of the existing building is respected in terms of materials, design, and principal architectural features.

- b) The proposal would provide acceptable levels of residential amenity for future occupiers of the development and would not unacceptably impact on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties.
- c) The proposal would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation, including adequate living space (including any communal areas), appropriate layout of rooms between units of accommodation, appropriate noise insulation, and a high quality internal and external environment including natural lighting and ventilation.
- d) The proposal provides acceptable access to the highway, vehicle parking and secure cycle storage and parking. All parking should be provided on-site and provision offered relative to accessibility.
- e) The proposal provides adequate on-site space for refuse and recycling storage facilities which is conveniently located for collection. Facilities should be contained within a covered storage area; and
- f) The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant overconcentration of flats or HMOs.

Policy DH2: Safeguarding amenity

1. Development proposals must ensure there are no unacceptable impacts on the amenity of existing or future occupiers. This includes the impact of individual development or, cumulatively, in combination with other development.
2. Development proposals should be sensitively designed and provide measures to avoid and/or mitigate against existing or potential impacts, in terms of:

- a) Loss of privacy and overlooking.
- b) Unacceptable overshadowing and a loss of daylight/sunlight.
- c) Visual intrusion, dominance or undue sense of enclosure, or an overbearing impact or harmful loss of outlook.
- d) Noise, vibration and disturbance.
- e) Artificial light pollution.
- f) Odour, dust and fumes; and
- g) Crime or the perception of unsafe environments.

3. Development proposals that would generate regular movements of HGVs and commercial traffic in residential areas must demonstrate how the impacts of noise, vibration, dust and fumes will be minimised in both the construction and operational phases.

4. Where necessary and appropriate, to protect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers planning conditions will be used to restrict hours, area(s) and the type(s) of use or operation.

5.0 ANALYSIS

5.1 This application seeks planning permission to change the use of the ground floor at 9 Crescent Road to create a one bed residential apartment. The merits of this proposal are assessed under the following headings:

- The Principle of the Change of Use
- The Quality and Functionality of the Accommodation Created
- Impact upon Residential Amenity
- Heritage Assessment

The Principle of the Change of Use

5.2 As summarised in Sections 2 and 3, No.9 Crescent Road was a single dwelling until 1974 when permission was granted to subdivide the building to create three flats and then in 1975 to create a ground floor commercial unit.

5.3 Crescent Road is very clearly of residential character; it is not a 'commercial' area. The conversion of the ground floor to residential use would be more characteristic of the location and context.

5.4 Further, as the property is located in close proximity to the town centre there is a wide range of shops, services and other commercial uses within an easy walking distance. There is therefore no need to retain a 'commercial use' in this location to meet any identified need or service the local community.

5.5 Policy H8 states that development proposals for the conversion or sub-division of buildings into self-contained flats will be supported within defined settlements, provided that a number of criteria are met.

5.6 The application property lies within the defined settlement boundary for Wokingham and complies with the six policy criteria as follows:

a) *The character and appearance of the existing building is respected in terms of materials, design, and principal architectural features.*

5.7 The application does not require or propose any changes to the external appearance of the building. There are therefore no changes to the building materials, nor would there be any loss of architectural features.

b) *The proposal would provide acceptable levels of residential amenity for future occupiers of the development and would not unacceptably impact on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties.*

5.8 As discussed below the proposal would provide high quality accommodation for the future occupiers. There would be no adverse impacts upon the existing residential flats above or any neighbouring properties. Rather the change proposed may be considered likely to improve neighbouring amenity through the removal of a commercial use from a primarily residential area.

c) *The proposal would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation, including adequate living space (including any communal areas), appropriate layout of rooms between units of accommodation, appropriate noise insulation, and a high quality internal and external environment including natural lighting and ventilation.*

5.9 The proposed residential unit would far exceed minimum space standards and provide the future occupiers with a high quality, generously sized garden space, private parking and a garage. Given that the surrounding uses are all residential there would be no adverse impacts in terms of the surrounding noise environment.

d) *The proposal provides acceptable access to the highway, vehicle parking and secure cycle storage and parking. All parking should be provided on-site and provision offered relative to accessibility.*

5.11 The proposal retains and utilises the existing access and on-site parking. No changes are proposed.

e) The proposal provides adequate on-site space for refuse and recycling storage facilities which is conveniently located for collection. Facilities should be contained within a covered storage area; and

5.12 It is proposed that cycle storage and refuse storage is provided within the existing garage to the rear of the property. Refuse would be brought to the kerbside on collection days. This follows the procedure elsewhere in the road.

f) The proposal would not, either individually or cumulatively, unduly dilute or harm an existing mixed and sustainable community through the significant overconcentration of flats or HMOs.

5.13 There is a mix of residential properties within the road ranging from larger detached houses through to smaller flats. The introduction of one additional flat as proposed would have not led to a particular concentration of one form of size or tenure of units.

5.14 In summary it is considered that the property lies within a sustainable residential location where the addition of a further residential apartment can be readily supported.

5.15 It is also relevant to highlight that the Council is currently in a position where a five-year supply of housing land cannot be demonstrated. The Council's published figures acknowledge a substantial shortfall at just 2.5 years. As such the presumption in favour of sustainable development or tilted balance, (NPPF paragraph 11D) applies. As the Council is aware this means that planning permission for new residential development should be granted unless the benefits of delivering new residential development in an area where there is an undersupply are "significantly and demonstrably" outweighed by the harm of doing so,

5.16 No harm arises from the grant of a residential permission in this case and certainly nothing that could be considered at a level of 'significant'. The NPPF therefore supports the principle of this proposal.

The Quality and Functionality of the Accommodation Created

5.17 The proposed new residential apartment would include one bedroom, a generous living space, kitchen and dining area as shown on the annotated plan extract below.

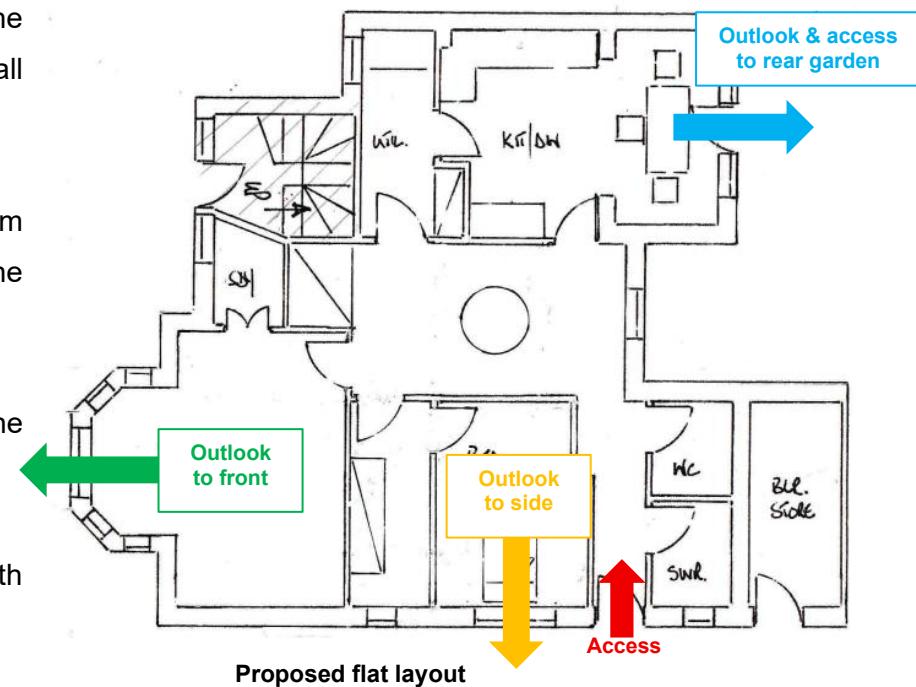
5.18 The flat would have a triple aspect. The front bay window provides outlook to Crescent Road and receives direct sunlight in the morning. The rear of the property benefits from outlook to the garden and the kitchen / dining space and garden receives direct sunlight in the afternoon and evening.

5.19 The proposal accords with current local plan policy TB07 as the internal space, floor to ceiling heights and individual room sizes all exceed the governments national space standards.

5.20 The layout is convenient and functional with all spaces accessed from a central hallway and the main access to the apartment taken from the north side.

5.21 It is considered that the flat would be a high-quality addition to the boroughs housing stock.

5.22 Occupiers would benefit from a large garden space and a garage with vehicular and cycle parking.



Impact on Residential Amenity

5.23 Policy DH2 of the emerging Loca Plan states that development proposals must ensure there are no unacceptable impacts on the amenity of existing or future occupiers. Development must avoid adverse impacts in terms of overlooking, overshadowing, visual intrusion, noise, light pollution, odour, fumes, crime or unsafe environments and traffic movements.

5.24 The proposed residential use would very clearly have no adverse impacts in terms of noise, odours and fumes.

5.25 No changes to the building are proposed ensuring that there would be no adverse impacts in terms of overshadowing or visual intrusion.

5.26 A change from a commercial use to a residential use has the potential to reduce traffic movements. There would be no changes to window positions and so overlooking and / or light pollution.

Heritage Assessment

5.27 National Planning Policy requires that when preparing and submitting an application involving a heritage asset an applicant should describe the significance of any asset potentially affected, including any contribution made by their setting. It advises that the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Adopted Local Plan Policy TB24 states that the Council will seek to preserve or enhance designated heritage assets in the Borough and their settings.

5.28 Responding to these requirements and as outlined in Section 2, the application property stands within the Murdoch Road Conservation Area, which is a designated heritage asset. No.9 itself is considered to comprise a positively contributing element within this much larger designated asset.

5.29 The character of the Conservation is that of late 1800's and early 1900's residential properties set in spacious plots. The roads are wide and characterised by street trees and trees within the property frontages which provide a verdant, low-density character.

5.30 The Conservation Area is associated with local architectural and building firm Morris & Son, who developed numerous properties in the area in the arts & Crafts style. The development within the Conservation Area provides evidence of the rapid expansion of the town during the early 1900's and in particular of housing development that was designed to respond to the growing middle-class population seeking higher quality and lower density homes.

5.31 In views along Crescent Road, No.9 makes a positive contribution. Its dual, gable fronted form and design, the plot layout and its presence as a consistent feature alongside other buildings in the road make a small but positive contribution to the overall character, appearance and quality of the Conservation Area.

5.32 The proposal which is the subject of this application does not seek to make any changes to the external appearance of the property. No extensions are proposed. The proposal relates purely to the way in which the ground floor space is used.

5.33 Given that Crescent Road is clearly of residential character and that No.9 itself was designed for residential occupation rather than commercial, the change of use to residential may be considered to have a small but positive impact on the overall character of the road. The change removes what is a non-confirming use and would reduce comings and goings and the extent of vehicular parking required both on site and on street.

5.34 It is therefore respectfully submitted that in heritage terms the proposals would at least preserve and rather in terms of the above respects may be considered likely to deliver a small but noticeable enhancement in character.

5.35 The proposals therefore comply with Policy TB24 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5.36 Local Plan Policy TB25 notes that areas of high archaeological potential are shown on the Policies Map and where this is the case an assessment of archaeological impacts is required. The application property does not lie in a priority area. Further as the proposal relates purely to a change of use there would be no impacts upon any archaeological interest even if that were not the case.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This proposal seeks to convert the ground floor at No.9 Crescent Road for use as a single residential flat. The first and second floors of the building are already in residential use. The building is of residential design and appearance, and the Council previously granted the use of the ground floor as a separate self-contained flat prior to its change to commercial use. Crescent Road is of residential character, and the proposal would reflect and strengthen this.
- 6.2 The Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year land supply and as such acknowledges that a presumption in favour of sustainable new residential development applies.
- 6.3 The property stands within the Murdock Road Conservation Area. It is of pleasant appearance and considered to make a positive contribution to the street scene within Crescent Road. No physical changes are proposed to the exterior of the building. It is therefore clear that in visual terms the character and appearance of the building would be preserved. However, the change to residential use and the removal of comings and goings and parking associated with the commercial use would represent a small but noticeable enhancement of the conservation area, the central significance of which is its quiet residential character.
- 6.4 The proposed new flat would provide high quality accommodation for the future occupiers with triple aspect, access to a generous garden, on plot parking and appropriate provision for refuse and cycle storage within the existing large garage building.
- 6.5 There would be no adverse impacts on the site's residential neighbours. As noted above, the change to a complementary residential use may be considered to result in a slight improvement in this regard through the removal of the comings and goings associated with commercial use.
- 6.6 Officers support for the application is requested.