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TRANSPORT TECHNICAL NOTE

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF FIRST FLOOR AT UNITS 2-3, 59 CROCKHAMWELL ROAD, WOODLEY, READING RG5 3JP

Prepared on behalf of Riverlow Reading Ltd

June 2024

Reference: P22049 TN3/PC

Introduction

- 1 This Transport Technical Note is prepared on behalf of Riverlow Reading Ltd (the 'applicant') in relation to their Prior Approval application to Wokingham Borough Council ('Wokingham BC') for the change of use of the first floor at Units 2-3, 59 Crockhamwell Road, Woodley, Reading RG5 3JP (the 'application site').
- 2 The application site presently comprises a two storey building in Class E commercial use, with two retail units at ground floor fronting onto Crockhamwell Road, with storage areas associated with the retail units at the rear of the ground floor and at first floor level. The application site is also inclusive of part of a surface level car park to the rear of the building which is accessed from Lytham Road.

- 3 The application relates to a change of use from 310 sqm GIA of Class E commercial space to 3 residential flats (use class C3) under Class MA of the current Permitted Development rights (reference *'Statutory Instruments, 2015 No. 596, The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England)* as amended (the GPDO).
- 4 Class MA of the GPDO states at paragraph MA.2 – *“(1) Development under Class MA is permitted subject to the following conditions. (2) Before beginning development under Class MA, the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to - (a) transport impacts of the development, particularly to ensure safe site access.”*
- 5 Class MA of the GPDO (paragraph W.5), requires the local authority to consider whether *“the development is likely to result in a material increase or a material change in the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site”*. If the local authority considers this to be the case, paragraph W.5(b) states that they must consult *“the local highway authority, where the increase or change relates to traffic entering or leaving a classified road or proposed highway, except where the local planning authority is the local highway authority”*.
- 6 Paragraph W.10 stipulates that the local authority must, when determining an application for Prior Approval, have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) so far as is relevant to the subject matter of the prior approval, as if the application were a planning application.
- 7 Paragraph 115 of the NPPF 2021 states *“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe”*.
- 8 Paragraph W.13 of the GPDO states that the local planning authority may grant prior approval unconditionally or subject to conditions reasonably related to the subject matter of the prior approval.

- 9** In October 2022, a Prior Approval application (Wokingham BC planning reference 222868) was approved for a single storey upwards extension of 5 flats above Units 1-3 (1 x studio, 2 x 1-bed units and 2 x 2-bed units) under Class AB of Part 20 of the GPDO.
- 10** In November 2022, a subsequent planning application (Wokingham BC planning reference 223566) for a two storey upwards extension of 9 flats above Units 1-3 (1 x studio, 5 x 1-bed units and 3 x 2-bed units) was submitted, with the proposed lower floor level of the proposed two-storey extension scheme effectively replicating the layout and schedule of the approved Prior Approval scheme under planning reference 222868. The planning application was approved in April 2023.
- 11** This note considers the potential transport and highways implications of the scheme in terms of accessibility, parking provision, site access and traffic generation in order to assist Wokingham BC in their determination of whether *“the development is likely to result in a material increase or a material change in the character of traffic in the vicinity of the site”*.

Site Location

- 12** The site is situated within Woodley town centre along the western side of the pedestrianised section of Crockhamwell Road, which forms the town centre primary shopping precinct. The location of the site is illustrated in **Figure 1** below.

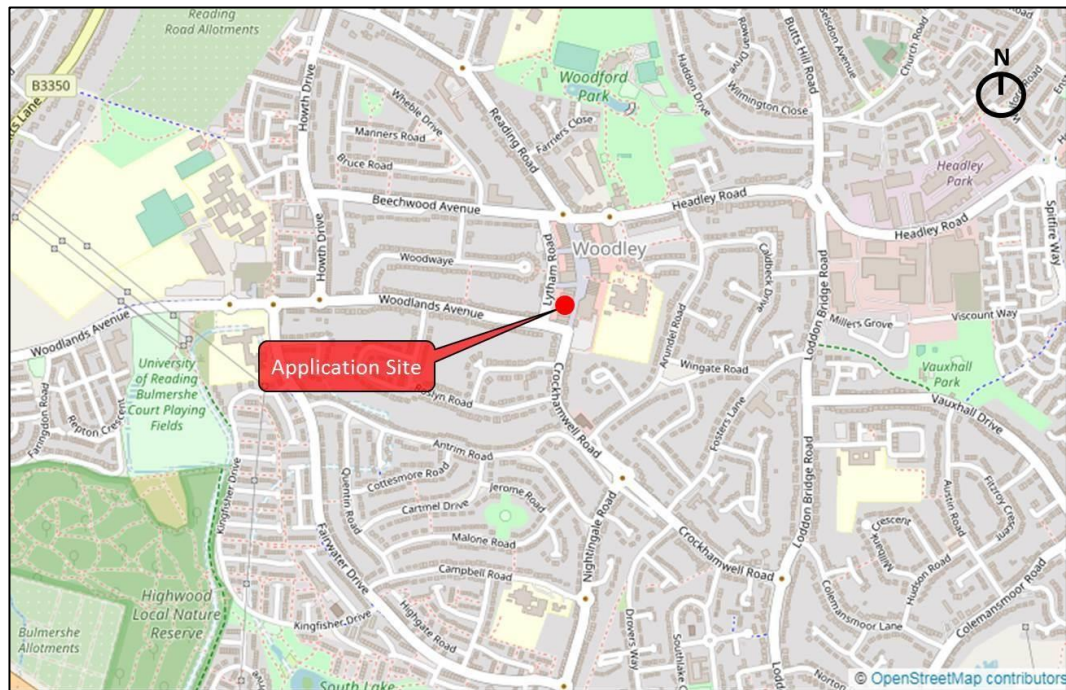


Figure 1: Site Location

- 13** As the site is located within the primary retail core of Woodley town centre, the surrounding area comprises a mix of predominantly retail uses, along with commercial and residential development. The site is located towards the southern end of the town centre shopping precinct and there are numerous retail and commercial uses and local amenities within the proximity of the site, including a range of shops, cafes, restaurants, convenience stores and foodstores typical of a town centre.
- 14** At ground floor level, the site has two retail units which are both presently vacant. The site is bordered to the north by a retail unit and to the south by Unit 1 which is presently occupied by a Robert Dyas store. Directly opposite the site to the east is a Waitrose foodstore alongside the main town centre car park. To the west, the site is bordered by Lytham Road beyond which are residential uses.

- 15** Some 30 metres to the south of the site, the pedestrianised section of Crockhamwell Road ends, with Crockhamwell Road continuing to the south as a two-way vehicular route with pedestrian footways along both sides. At the southern end of the pedestrianised zone, Crockhamwell Road forms a junction with Woodlands Avenue to the west and the exit of the town centre car park to the east. A further 50 metres to the west, Woodlands Avenue forms a three-arm priority junction with Lytham Road which runs largely parallel to the pedestrianised section of Crockhamwell Road and from which access to the site car park is gained.
- 16** At the northern end of Crockhamwell Road, Headley Road forms a three-arm mini-roundabout junction with Reading Road and Beechwood Avenue.
- 17** The rear of the application site is inclusive of 15 car parking spaces under the ownership of the applicant for use by Units 1-3. Further car parking spaces within the wider parking area are associated with the adjoining uses. Whilst the car park is privately owned, it is not under the control of a parking management company.
- 18** Under the current tenancy agreements, the adjacent Robert Dyas unit (Unit 1) has use of one car parking space. Therefore 14 of the car parking spaces are technically vacant, although on-site observations show that they are regularly being utilised, most probably by adjacent occupants or by town centre shoppers.
- 19** The approved PD scheme (reference 222868) removes 2 parking spaces in favour of cycle and refuse storage facilities and 3 spaces are to be allocated to residents of the scheme. The subsequent planning permission (reference 223566) increases the number of spaces allocated to residents of the second and third floors from 3 to 5 spaces, whilst maintaining the number of spaces removed for the cycle and refuse storage provision as two spaces. This leaves a net surplus of 7 spaces available.

- 20** Due to its location within the town centre, the site is situated within an area that has comprehensive car parking controls on the roads surrounding the site. All roads within the vicinity of the site are subject to double yellow line restrictions or zig-zag markings associated with pedestrianised crossings. No on-street car parking is possible, with all town centre car parking taking place within designated town centre car parks.
- 21** There are therefore considered to be no unenforceable, unsafe on-street parking opportunities on the surrounding highway network whereby overspill parking could take place to the detriment of highway safety.

Accessibility

- 22** The application site is located within an established built-up, town centre location surrounded by an array of retail, commercial and residential uses and therefore benefits from extensive pedestrian infrastructure in the locality, including the pedestrianised section of Crockhamwell Road onto which the site fronts. There are few barriers to walking, with standard width footways provided along both sides of the surrounding roads and pedestrian crossings with dropped kerbs and tactile paving located at key desire lines.
- 23** Assuming a standard walking speed of 1.2m/s, all town centre amenities and shops are within a 10 minute walk of the site.
- 24** The closest bus stops to the site are located along Headley Road, Reading Road and Beechwood Avenue at the northern end of Crockhamwell Road, all within a 300 metre walk distance from the site.
- 25** A summary of the regular bus services that are accessible from the bus stops (referred to as the 'Chequers' bus stops) and their typical frequencies is set out overleaf.

Service Number	Stop Reference (walk distance)	Route	Daytime Frequency (buses/hour)		
			Week	Sat	Sun
13 orange	Beechwood Ave (300m)	Reading Station – Bulmershe – Woodley – Reading Station	2/hr	2/hr	1/hr
14 orange	Headley Rd 'A' (250m)	Reading Station - Woodley – Bulmershe – Reading Station	2/hr	2/hr	1/hr
19a little orange	Beechwood Ave (300m)	Central Reading & Station – Royal Berkshire Hospital – University of Reading – Loddon Bridge – Woodley – Bulmershe – Central Reading & Station	1/hr	1/hr	-
19c little orange	Headley Rd 'A' (250m)	Central Reading & Station - Bulmershe - Woodley - Loddon Bridge - University of Reading - Royal Berkshire Hospital - Central Reading & Station	1/hr	1/hr	-
127	Reading Rd 'D' (270m)	Reading – Woodley – Sonning – Twyford – Knowl Hill - Maidenhead	1/hr	Services 127 & 128 provide combined hourly service in each direction	-
	Beechwood Ave (300m)	Maidenhead – Knowl Hill – Twyford – Sonning – Woodley - Maidenhead	1/hr		-
128	Reading Rd 'D' (270m)	Reading – Woodley – Sonning – Charvil – Twyford – Winnersh - Wokingham	1/hr		-
	Beechwood Ave (300m)	Wokingham – Winnersh – Twyford – Charvil – Sonning – Woodley - Reading	1/hr		-

Table 1: Summary of Bus Services Stopping within the Vicinity of the Site

- 26** It can be seen that the local bus services provide regular routes to key local destinations including Wokingham, Maidenhead, Central Reading and Reading Station.
- 27** Reading rail station is located a 5.5km travel distance to the west of the site. Whilst such a distance is considered to be too far for residents to be likely to walk or, to a lesser extent, cycle regularly for commuting purposes, the station is directly accessible from the site by local timetabled bus services.
- 28** The station, along with the adjacent main bus interchange, is recognised as a key regional transport hub and has undergone a recent major redevelopment, with significant track, platform, concourse and public realm works to improve rail capacity and passenger facilities.

- 29** Rail services from Reading station are operated by First Great Western, South West Trains and Cross Country Trains and provide frequent connections to the regional and national rail network.
- 30** First Great Western operates services to destinations including London Paddington, Didcot Parkway, Maidenhead, Swindon, Oxford, Banbury, Bristol, Taunton, Exeter and further destinations within the southwest of England.
- 31** South West Trains operate services to destinations including London Waterloo, Ascot, Basingstoke, Winchester, Eastleigh, Fareham, Woking, Clapham Junction, Southampton and Portsmouth.
- 32** Cross Country Trains operate services to destinations including Guildford, Southampton, Bournemouth, Oxford, Coventry, Birmingham, Manchester, York, the North of England and Scotland.
- 33** The site is therefore situated within a highly accessible location close to public transport services and town centre amenities and is consequently considered to be very well connected by non-car modes of travel.

Proposals

- 34** The change of use comprises the conversion of 224sqm GIA of Class E commercial space to 3 x C3 residential flats comprising 1 x studio, 1 x 1-bed (2 person) and 1 x 2-bed (3 person) units.
- 35** The proposed site layout and floor plans are shown within Blox Architect's drawings which accompany the planning application submission.

Cycle Parking and Refuse Storage Provision

- 36** For Prior Approval applications, it is established that the provision of cycle parking relates to convenience only, rather than an impact on transport and highways. However, the applicant recognises the importance of encouraging residents to cycle and therefore the indicative site layout plan illustrates how a minimum of 3 secure and sheltered cycle parking spaces could be provided (i.e. 1 space per unit with up to 3 habitable rooms, in accordance with the Wokingham BC Local Plan cycle parking standards).
- 37** The indicative site layout plan also illustrates how the bin storage arrangements would be provided for the proposed 3 dwellings.
- 38** Both the cycle parking and refuse storage areas are shown as being achieved by utilising the two marked car parking spaces within the site, as previously approved for the upwards extension proposals
- 39** It is not expected that the residential development will generate a significant number of service vehicle movements and the area to the rear of the building can continue to be utilised for the general servicing needs of the proposed use. Overall therefore, it is considered that the servicing and refuse collection arrangements for both the existing and proposed site uses will be entirely appropriate for the needs of the occupants.

Car Parking Provision

- 40** As discussed above, the site has 15 associated car parking spaces of which one space is entitled to be utilised by Robert Dyas. Five spaces are to be allocated to the approved 9 residential units under planning permission 223566, with a further two spaces to be removed to provide cycle and refuse storage facilities for the residential units. This leaves a surplus of seven car parking spaces.
- 41** Of the seven surplus spaces, three shall be allocated to the proposed three units.

- 42** Although the application of standards is not relevant, Wokingham BC's locally adopted car parking standards set out within Appendix 2 of their Local Plan *"it will be the responsibility of the developer to prove that parking provision has been adequately catered for on a proposed site. The developer must prove that parking will not have a detrimental effect on traffic safety or on the character of an area due to an increase in parking on the public highway. This should be set out in the Transport Statement or Transport Assessment as part of the planning application."*
- 43** The standards also state that they *"should be regarded only as a starting point in any discussions with the Borough Council as it should be recognised that each development site will need to be assessed on its own merits, within the wider context of the area in which the development sits."* Also, *"For Residential parking the developer will need to show that spaces identified to serve each dwelling are within an acceptable distance from that dwelling (normally 25m for allocated parking)."*
- 44** For flats that will be privately owned, the standards are:

No of Habitable Rooms		Unallocated demand								
		0	1	2	0	1	2	0	1	2
	No of Bedrooms	Urban			Town and Fringe			Village		
1	studio	0.7	0.0		0.7*	0.0*		0.7*	0.0*	
2	1	1.0	0.2	0.0	1.0*	0.2*	0.0*	0.3	0.0	0.0
3	1-2	0.9	0.2	0.0	0.9*	0.2*	0.0*	0.6	0.1	0.0
4	2	1.0	0.2	0.0	1.0*	0.2*	0.0*	1.1	0.3	0.0
5 or more	2-3	1.2	0.4	0.1	1.2*	0.4*	0.1*	1.5	0.5	0.0

Table C3-1: Flats Owned unallocated parking demand

- 45** On the basis of the above, it is considered that the allocation of up to 3 car parking spaces to the occupants of the proposed 3 residential units would be appropriate and would not result in an adverse effect on the highway network in terms of car parking demand. Consequently the proposed change of use would not lead to *"a material change in the character of the traffic in the vicinity of the site"*.

- 46 The remaining 4 car parking spaces on site under the ownership of the applicant would remain available for commercial and/or residential related purposes subject to demand. In this regard, it is noted that when last occupied, Unit 2 did not have any car parking entitlement, just loading and unloading from the rear.
- 47 With regards to visitor car parking, the town centre car park located opposite the site would provide appropriate short term parking facilities.

Traffic Generation

- 48 As the site is within such an accessible location and with minimal car parking provided, the proposed residential units would attract very little in the way of vehicular movements as there would be a strong presumption against driving to and from the site.
- 49 It is generally accepted that commercial use generates a greater number of traffic movements than equivalent residential use, particularly during network peak periods
- 50 Notwithstanding the traffic movements associated with the existing use, data from the TRICS database typically indicates that for flatted dwellings in accessible locations such as this, the peak hour vehicle trip generation is no greater than 0.4 trips/unit and the daily vehicle trip generation is circa 4 trips/unit. We could therefore reasonably expect the proposed 3 residential units to generate circa 1-2 vehicle movements during the peak hours and 12 vehicle movements over a typical weekday.
- 51 Cumulatively, the total 12 residential units if approved, would generate circa 5 vehicle movements during the peak hours and 48 vehicle movements over a weekday.
- 52 Such a level of traffic during the typical network peak hours and daily time periods considered would unlikely to be perceptible and well within the typical daily variation in traffic flows. Therefore the proposed residential units would not result in *“a material increase in traffic onto the highway network in the vicinity of the site”*.

Summary and Conclusion

- 53** This report has been prepared in respect of a Prior Approval application to Wokingham Borough Council ('Wokingham BC') for the change of use of the first floor to C3 residential use at Units 2-3, 59 Crockhamwell Road, Woodley, Reading RG5 3JP.
- 54** The site is located within Woodley town centre and so there is an array of local town centre amenities within a short walk distance of the site. The site is accessible by non- car modes of travel and the surrounding roads are subject to comprehensive and enforceable parking controls. Consequently residents would not necessarily be reliant on the use of a car for typical day-to-day journeys.
- 55** The development proposals utilise approved resident's sheltered and secure cycle storage and bin storage arrangements at surface level to the rear of the building.
- 56** It has been demonstrated that the provision of up to three car parking spaces for the proposed three units would not cause detriment to the local highway network. The residential units would lead to an imperceptible change in traffic movements to and from the site.
- 57** The proposed change of use would therefore not give rise to any adverse transport impacts and is considered an entirely appropriate form of development in transport terms.

