

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

LITTLEFIELDS LTD

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

**5-7 HIGH STREET
SUNNINGHILL
BERKSHIRE
SL5 9NQ**

**Erection of replacement roof with new dormers and conversion of roofspace
to form 4no. one bedroom apartments**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement is submitted in support of a full application by Littlefields Ltd to erect a replacement roof with new dormers and conversion of the new roof space to form 4no. one bedroom apartments provide 6no. new dwellings, following demolition of the existing dwelling.
- 1.2 The statement is divided into 4 main sections dealing with the following issues:
- Site and surrounding area
 - Planning history
 - Planning policy context
 - The proposal
 - Design and access
 - Summary and conclusions
- 1.3 This statement will confirm that the proposal would not be contrary to national or local policy guidance and would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It will also be demonstrated that the submission is sustainable and will make an important contribution towards the Council's windfall site provision.

2 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site is located on the western side of the High Street, Sunninghill. The site lies within the urban/built up area of Sunninghill and specifically within the Sunninghill Village Centre as defined within the Development Plan Proposals map.
- 2.2 The site currently comprises of a two storey building with retail uses on the ground floor and B1(a) offices on the first floor which currently have an extant permission under a Class O Prior Approval for conversion to 5 flats (21/00907). To the rear of the building is a hard surfaced parking area accessed from High Street, providing space for 14 cars. To the rear of the car park and on higher ground are the rear gardens of properties in The Terrace and Bowden Road.
- 2.3 The surrounding area comprises a mix of residential, retail and other commercial uses associated with the High Street. To the north of the site is nos. 1-3 High Street which comprises a retail use on the ground floor. Prior approval was granted under Class O in May 2019 for the change of use of part of the first floor from B1(a) office to C3 (dwelling) under Ref. 19/00867. Planning permission was also granted in October 2019 under Ref. 19/00897/FULL for change of use of part of first floor from D1 (Chiropractor) and B1(a) (office) to C3 (2 bedroom apartment).
- 2.4 To the south of the site is 9 High Street which is also retail on the ground floor. Prior approval was granted in May 2015 under Ref. 15/00859/CLASSO for the change of use of the first floor from office to 2 x 1 bed flats.

Existing rear elevation showing drop in levels between the car park and the building



3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 The most relevant planning history is set out below:

WR/137/71 – Outline. Demolish existing and erect two shops with offices over.
Approved 16.12.71.

WR/333/72 – Demolition of existing and erection of three shops with offices over.
Approved 4.12.72.

98/77554/FUL – Change of use of Unit 2 from A1 (retail) to A2 (financial and professional services). Approved 27 January 1999.

21/00907 – Class O Permitted Development change of use of first floor from Office to Residential to provide 5 flats. Prior approval required and granted 17.05.2021.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

i) Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework – February 2019

- 4.1 Paragraph 7 of the revised NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 states that in achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. Paragraph 10 states that '*So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the framework is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development** (paragraph 11).* The guidance states at paragraph 11 that for decision taking, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to date development plan without delay; or 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:
- The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - 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.
- 4.2 Paragraph 38 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 4.3 Chapter 11 is concerned with making effective use of land. Paragraph 117 states that planning policies and decision should promote an effective use of land in

meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Paragraph 118 states that planning policies and decisions should, amongst other matters promote and support the following:

- Promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively (for example converting space above shops, and building on or above services yards, car parks, lock-ups and railway infrastructure); and
- Support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes. In particular, they should allow upward extensions where the development would be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties and the overall street scene, is well-designed (including complying with any local design policies and standards) and can maintain safe access and egress for occupiers.

4.4 Paragraph 122 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- Local market conditions and viability;
- The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- The desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and

- The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

4.5 Chapter 12 is concerned with achieving well designed places. Paragraph 124 states that the creation of high quality building and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Create safe and accessible environments.

ii) **The Development Plan**

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (adopted in July 1999, incorporating alterations adopted in July 2003)

4.6 Relevant policies include Policy DG1, H10 and H11.

4.7 Policy DG1 sets out Design Guidelines in respect of new development. The following criteria are considered to be of most relevance to this application:

- The design of new buildings should be compatible with the established street façade having regard to the scale, height and building lines of adjacent properties;
- Materials which are sympathetic to the traditional building materials of the area should be used;
- Where appropriate, development proposals will be expected to include landscaping schemes;
- Harm should not be caused to the character of the area though development which is cramped or which results in the loss of important features that contribute to that character.

4.8 Policy H10 – Housing Layout and Design. This policy states that new residential development schemes will be required to display high standards of design and landscaping in order to create attractive, safe and diverse residential areas, and where possible, to enhance the existing environment. The policy requires proposals where possible to ensure the retention of important views, requires the creation of visual interest, ensure safe movement and the provision of parking in close proximity to housing.

4.9 Policy H11 – States that in established residential areas, planning permission will not be granted for schemes which introduce a scale or density of new development which would be incompatible with or cause damage to the character and amenity of the area.

RBWM Borough Local Plan 2013-2033 Submission Version

4.10 The Submission Version of the Borough Local Plan does not form part of the Statutory Development Plan, however it is at a relatively advanced stage in its preparation and such can be afforded some weight in the decision-making process. The most relevant emerging policies are briefly summarised below:

4.11 Policy SP1 – Spatial Strategy for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

- 4.12 Policy SP2 – Sustainability and Placemaking. States that all new development should positively contribute to the places in which they are located.
- 4.13 Policy SP3 – Character and Design of New Development. Seeks development to be of a high quality design.

Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2026

- 4.14 Relevant policies are set out below:
- 4.15 Policy NP/H2 Mix of House Types – Development proposals for new dwellings will be expected to contribute to the aim of ensuring a balanced mix of housing in the Plan area. Policy NP/H2.1 requires that dwellings should be, in size and type, in keeping with the size and type of dwellings already prevalent in the surrounding area except where there is a demonstrable need for an alternative type or size of home and they can be delivered to be in keeping with the surrounding area.
- 4.16 Policy NP/DG1 Respecting the Townscape – Proposals should use the RBWM Townscape Assessment report, and specifically its sections “Key Characteristics” and “Description”, to inform the design approach. Policy NP/DG1.2 states that Leafy Residential Suburbs, Villas in a Woodland Setting and Executive Residential Estates, residential development should comprise low or very low density developments of detached houses, unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that other forms of development would retain the identified character of the area. Policy NP/DG1.3 also requires that in Leafy Residential Suburbs and Villas in a Woodland Setting, proposals should retain and enhance the sylvan, leafy nature of the area, which, where possible and appropriate, should include the planting of trees and/or shrubs along the street and neighbouring sites boundaries.
- 4.17 Policy NP/DG2 – Density, footprint, separation, scale, bulk - seeks to ensure that new development is of similar density, footprint, separation, scale and bulk of buildings in the surrounding area generally and of neighbouring properties in particular. New development should respect features such as: established building lines, arrangements of front garden, walls, railings or hedges, established plot

widths within streets where development is proposed; the separation between buildings, and between buildings and the site boundaries, in relation to likely impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties.

- 4.18 Policy NP/DG3 Good Quality design – seeks to ensure that all new development should demonstrate good quality design and respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 4.19 Policy NP/T1 Parking and Access. Development proposals must make adequate provision for parking and access. Development proposals must, wherever possible, provide adequate parking on-site and not rely on on-street parking.

iii) **Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Townscape Character Study (2010)**

- 4.20 Whilst not forming part of the statutory development plan or a Supplementary Planning Document, the RBWM Townscape Character Study identifies the site to be within a 'Sunninghill Victorian Village' character area (5D). The main consideration within this area is that building mass, scale and roofscape etc does not detract from St Michaels Church of England Primary School, the Novello Theatre, Cordes Hall and the residences in 'The Terrace' as landmarks.

5 THE PROPOSAL

5.1 The proposal provides for 4no. new one bedroom apartments within a replacement roof.

5.2 The key considerations are therefore considered to be as follows:

- The principle of development;
- Design, character and appearance;
- Living conditions of adjoining occupiers and new occupants;
- Access and parking provision;
- Trees and flooding;
- Housing land supply.

i) Principle of development

5.3 The proposal falls within the defined settlement of Sunninghill where residential development is acceptable in principle. The site is in a sustainable location, close to a number of bus routes along the adjacent High Street as well as a wide variety of shops and restaurants. The proposal is for efficient use of urban land in keeping with the local context in accordance with Policies DG1, H10 and H11 of the adopted RBWM Local Plan (LP), Policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2 and NP/DG3 of the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2026 (NP) and paragraphs contained within the NPPF. Indents (d) and (e) of paragraph 118 is of particular importance:

- The proposal would promote and underutilised building where a slightly smaller roof already exists. Land supply is already constrained in the Borough;

- The proposal includes in part the use of some airspace above an existing building.

5.4 The proposal will contribute towards meeting the housing needs of the Borough through the effective use of land within a settlement area. There are no local or national policies which resist the principle of additional dwellings on this site.

ii) Design, Character and Appearance

5.5 The site is within an area designated as 'Victorian Village' in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Townscape Character Study (2010). The site itself falls within area 5D – Sunninghill Victorian Village.

5.6 Policies DG1, H10, H11 and N6 of the adopted LP and Policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2, NP/DG3 and NP/EN2 of the NP collectively seek to achieve a high standard of design and landscaping, maintain the character and amenity of an area and respect local townscape. These policies are generally consistent with the NPPF in this respect.

5.7 In designing the current scheme, consideration has been given to the scale of buildings either side of the site and its sustainable location within a village centre where there are numerous local facilities and bus routes traversing the High Street. The proposal increases the height of the existing roof by approximately 1m. This will be marginally higher than the building to the north (7m away) at No.3 High Street but well below the height of the 3 storey building to the south (No.9 High Street). No extension to the building footprint of the building is proposed.

5.8 The proposal would be appropriate in terms of its density, and would have a similar scale and bulk as other buildings in the locality. The proposed roof would be of a high quality in terms of its design and materials. Accordingly, the proposal complies with Policies DG1, H10, H11 and N6 of the adopted LP and Policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2, NP/DG3 and NP/EN2 of the NP. It also complies with the NPPF insofar as it seeks high quality design.

iii) Living conditions of adjoining occupiers and new occupants

- 5.9 As stated above, the replacement roof is only 1m higher than the existing structure. The view and outlook from adjacent properties to the north and south of the application site will therefore be little changed by the proposals. To the rear of the site, the proposed second floor habitable windows will be sited over 18m from the rear boundary of properties Bowden Road and The Terrace. The closest rear elevation is over 35m away. Given that the levels on the application site are considerable below those of gardens to the rear, it is considered that there would not be any harmful overlooking. First floor habitable windows are already approved under the Class O permission.
- 5.10 All of the apartments comply with the Government Nationally Prescribed Space Standards for one bedroom flats. Each unit will have an open aspect either to the front or to the rear of the building. In common with other flats above the retail frontage in Sunninghill High Street and the extent permission to convert the first floor at the application site, no external amenity space is being provided.
- 5.11 The proposal therefore complies with saved Policies H10 and H11 of the LP and paragraph 127 (f) of the NPPF which together seek a high standard of design and amenity for existing and future users.

iv) Access and Parking provision

- 5.12 The proposed apartments would each be provided with 1no. parking space in accordance with the Council's standards. The dwellings would be accessed via the existing access point from the High Street. All of the spaces approved under the Prior Approval are maintained and a new cycle store will also be provided.

v) Trees and Flooding

- 5.13 The application site does not contain any trees and is located with Flood Zone 1. It is therefore unconstrained in terms of physical constraints.

vi) Housing Land Supply

- 5.14 Paragraph 73 of the NPPF states that LPAs should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer of 5% buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or 10% where the LPA wishes to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites through an annual position statement or recently adopted plan, to account for any fluctuations in the market during that year; or 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years.
- 5.15 The Council do not currently have a five year housing land supply. In March 2019, the Council could only demonstrate a 4.1 year housing land supply.
- 5.16 In line with footnote 7 to paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are therefore deemed out of date. The 'tilted balance' contained in paragraph 11(d) (ii) of the NPPF is therefore engaged in respect of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It has already been demonstrated above that the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance does not provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. There are no significant adverse impacts that would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal' and the proposal would make a significant contribution to the supply of housing in the Borough.

6 DESIGN AND ACCESS

- 6.1 Use: The site is in mixed use with the first floor already approved for residential use.
- 6.2 Amount: The proposal is for 4no. one bedroom dwellings.
- 6.3 Layout: The proposed layout of the site would remain unchanged in terms of building position, the spread of development, the nature of the access into the site and the parking and bin storage areas.
- 6.4 Scale: The scale of the building will be similar to the existing structure as this is to replace an existing roof with a new slightly higher structure. The scale of the building with the replacement roof will reflect the scale of buildings either side of the site.
- 6.5 Appearance: The provision of habitable accommodation at first floor level is consistent with neighbouring buildings including No.9 to the south which is already of a 2 ½ storey height.
- 6.6 Landscaping: The proposal reuses existing hardstanding.
- 6.7 Access: The access arrangement for the car park will remain unchanged. Parking and cycle spaces are provided in accordance with adopted standards.

7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The application proposal is for a replacement roof to accommodate 4no. new dwellings. The application should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The site falls within the defined settlement of Sunninghill and specifically the Village Centre where residential development is acceptable in principle. It is in a sustainable location, close to a wide range of shops and other local facilities and well served by local bus routes. The proposal is for efficient use of urban land being in keeping with the local context in accordance with Policies DG1, H10 and H11 of the adopted LP and Policies NP/DG1, NP/DG2 and NP/DG3 of the NP and advice contained within the NPPF which as para. 117.
- ii) The proposal is consistent with the advice contained within the RBWM Townscape Assessment which defines the site as being within a 'Village Centre'. The proposal provides for high quality design which respects the local context and spatial characteristics of the street frontage.
- iii) The proposed development has taken into account adjacent properties and ensures that the proposal would not result in material harm to the living conditions of occupants. The proposal complies with saved Policies H10 and H11 of the LP and paragraph 127 (f) of the NPPF which together seek a high standard of design and amenity for existing and future users.
- i) The proposal maintains and existing access from High Street and provides parking and cycle spaces in accordance with the Council's standards.