



# Gasson Planning & Projects

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## **Proposed conversion of dwelling to a house in multiple occupation and associated alterations, 104 High Street, Milton Regis, Sittingbourne ME10 2AN**

### **Planning Statement**

#### **Introduction**

Planning permission and Listed Building Consent is sought to convert this two-storey terraced residential property [which has accommodation in the roof and a basement] in the Milton Regis area of Sittingbourne to a house in multiple occupation. The property is listed Grade II, being part of a larger group of buildings all of which are listed, and lies within the Milton Regis Conservation Area.

The site is within the built-up area of Sittingbourne, effectively on the fringe of the Town Centre, in an area of mixed uses including a variety of commercial activities as well as residential property comprising both single dwellings and sub divided properties. Immediately adjoining this site in 104A is a mixed use with a hot food take away on the ground floor including kitchens to the rear adjacent to this property's courtyard and residential flats above.

Although within a small parade it is not identified by the Council as primary or secondary frontage.

## **Previous planning history**

Historically the property was a single dwelling.

In 2002 planning permission was granted for the use of the premises as a Physiotherapy Clinic [SW/02/1089]. It subsequently was used for a variety of commercial uses and by 2018 was occupied by BAC Care Ltd providing elderly home care and support services.

In 2018 an application was submitted to convert the property to a single residential dwelling [18/505102]. This was permitted but an amended similar proposal was submitted and approved under reference 19/502476.

The conversion to a single dwelling took place but not all the refurbishment work was carried out and the property remains in a poor condition.

The application site is a substantial single dwelling. The location of the building has inevitably meant that despite the size of the accommodation the opportunity for associated amenities such as private open space and parking facilities have respectively been very limited and non-existent. The continued use of the property as a single dwelling is therefore increasingly compromised and unviable.

## **Planning policy**

### **National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF]**

The NPPF sets out the Government's overall and broad guidance on planning policies. First issued in 2012 it has been amended on several occasions, most recently in September this year.

It sets out a number of principles which are apposite to this proposal including:

1. The need for all new development to be in a sustainable location;
2. The importance of maintaining a good supply of housing with a mix of housing type and size;
3. The need for town centres to be maintained as vital and prosperous places with a range of uses;

4. The importance of protecting and enhancing our historic heritage and preserving the future and character of listed buildings and conservation areas.

This site is within the heart of the urban area of Sittingbourne and therefore in a highly sustainable location. It will provide an increase in the number of housing units in the Borough and importantly adds to the supply of more modest housing opportunities providing the chance for those who historically have had difficulty getting on to the housing ladder to do so. In the same way it contributes to the range of appropriate uses in the town centre fringe maintaining its vitality.

This proposal also enables a viable use to be accommodated in the listed building thereby protecting its future and, at the same time, ensuring that the character of the conservation area is enhanced and protected.

The proposal therefore very much accords with the thrust of the NPPF.

### **Swale Local Plan [Bearing Fruits 2031].**

The broad policies set out in the NPPF are carried forward in more detail within the Local Plan, and again a number of policies are especially relevant to this proposal.

1. **Policy DM1** deals with premises in a commercial area but outside a primary or secondary frontage. It states that the Council will permit a non-retail use if it maintains the area's role, functioning, vitality and viability, does not result in a loss of existing residential accommodation or lead to the loss of residential amenity.
2. **Policy CP3** deals with delivering a wide choice of high-quality homes and especially seeks a mix of housing types satisfying identified housing needs. It seeks an equally high level of design standards in all respects.
3. **Policy CP8** seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment of the Borough by ensuring the significance of heritage assets and their setting. It also seeks to bring heritage assets into sensitive and sustainable use within [inter alia] town centres.
4. **Policy DM2** states that planning permission will be granted for main town centre uses subject to other policies in the plan.
5. **Policy DM32** deals more specifically with proposals affecting Listed Buildings. It states that development proposals including any change of use

affecting a listed building and its setting will be permitted provided that the building's special architectural and historic interest is preserved having regard to design, materials, and detailing, and also the appropriateness of the proposed use.

This proposal, as previously stated, provides an increase in housing units and especially provides smaller units of accommodation entirely appropriate to the town centre fringe location. Residential is a main town centre use and it therefore contributes appropriately to the vitality of this mixed use area.

The proposal will not in any way detract from the amenity or privacy of either existing dwellings or those proposed.

Moreover, this proposal seeks to provide a viable and entirely appropriate use to the listed building which, with the sensitive design proposed as is evident from the submitted plans, will ensure the future viability and protection of the property and indeed, thereby enhance its contribution to the conservation area.

This proposal therefore very much also complies with the policy guidance set out in the Local Plan and can benefit from the commitment, in the Local Plan, that planning permission will be granted.

## **Vehicle Parking**

It is acknowledged that the site does not have off street parking, and it would be entirely inappropriate to seek to include parking within the site. However, note has been taken of policy DM7 of the Local Plan, which cross references Kent County Council Vehicle Parking Standards, and which in locations such as the centre of Sittingbourne aim to reduce the demand for vehicle parking bearing in mind the high level of accessibility to public transport.

The encouragement to provide secure cycle parking is however acknowledged and that is precisely what this development seeks to do as will be seen from the submitted plans.

## **Conclusion**

This proposal follows both national and local planning guidance. It promotes a scheme which provides an increase in overall housing supply and especially

increases the number of smaller units in an entirely appropriate location.

In so doing not only does it contribute to the vitality of the local area, but it also brings forward a use which will sustain the long-term viability of the listed building ensuring its protection and which, in turn, will help protect and preserve the Conservation Area.

No material harm arises from the application.

I therefore suggest that it would be entirely appropriate for planning permission to be granted for this development.

Trevor Gasson  
November 2023