



# Planning Statement

**82A High Street, Staple Hill**

Mr P Kirby & Mrs A Gapare  
March 2024

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# Planning Statement

## 82A High Street, Staple Hill

Date: March 2024

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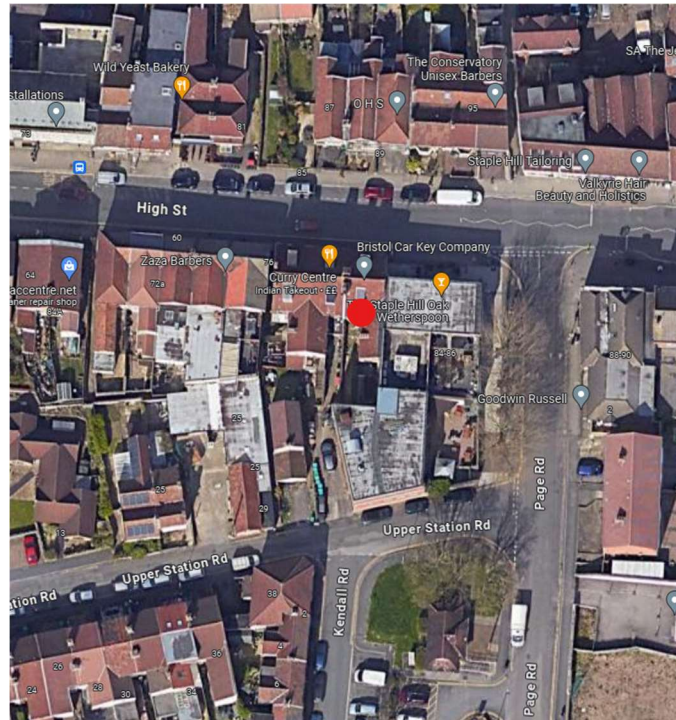


## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Alder King Planning Consultants have been instructed by Mr P Kirby and Mrs A Gapare to submit a planning application seeking full planning permission for the change of use of 82A High Street, Staple Hill from a dwellinghouse (Class C3) to office use (Class E(g)(i)). The change of use proposed relates to the upper floors (first and second floor) only. The ground floor of the unit (No. 82) will remain in retail use.
- 1.2 No external alterations are proposed to the building.
- 1.3 This statement describes the site and the proposed use of the property, sets out the relevant planning history and the relevant planning policies against which the application should be determined, and then assesses the proposed use against these policies.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the application drawings.

## 2.0 Application Site and Surrounds

- 2.1 The application site is located on the southern side of High Street, to the immediate west of 'The Staple Hill Oak' public house and close to the junction of High Street and Page Road in Staple Hill town centre (see Figure 1 below).



**Figure 1: Site Location**

- 2.2 No. 82 High Street is the ground floor retail premises which is not subject of this application. No. 82A is a three bedroom maisonette spanning the first and second floor (Use Class C3). It is these upper floors which are subject to this change of use application.
- 2.3 In terms of the surrounding context, the application site is located within the designated town centre of Staple Hill and forms part of the Primary Shopping Area. The area is characterised by a mix of retail and commercial properties at ground floor level, with residential or complementary commercial/office uses on upper floors.
- 2.4 The character of the area is generally that of two or three story properties located close to the street.
- 2.5 There are bus stops situated approximately 50m and 120m to the east and west of the site respectively on High Street. These provide access to Kingswood, Emersons Green and onward connections to other areas of the City. The core of Staple Hill Town Centre is the junction of High Street/Broad Street and Soundwell Road/Victoria Street approximately a 200m to the east.

## 3.0 Relevant Planning History

- 3.1 There is no planning history related to the site on the South Gloucestershire Council Planning Website.

## 4.0 Application Proposals

- 4.1 The applicant is in the process of purchasing the property and intends for the ground floor retail unit to continue to operate with no change.
- 4.2 Planning permission is being sought for the change of use of the upper floors from residential use (Class C3) to office use Class E(g)(i). The applicant is intending to occupy the upper floors to operate their own HR business. The business will employ approximately 5 people at the premises.
- 4.3 No external alterations are proposed to the property.
- 4.4 The existing access to the property will be retained which is provide by an external stair to the rear of the building, as shown on the submitted plans.
- 4.5 The proposed layout of the office use is shown on the submitted drawings and as can be seen does not require any internal alterations to the property, simply the repurposing of existing rooms.



## 5.0 Planning Policy Context

5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 This section of the Planning Statement considers the planning policy context relevant to the proposed development as contained in the development plan and material considerations.

### **Development Plan**

5.3 The development plan for the South Gloucestershire area consists of:

- The South Gloucestershire Core Strategy (2006-2027) (Adopted in December 2013);
- The Policies, Sites and Places Plan DPD (Adopted November 2017); and,
- Joint Waste Core Strategy (Adopted March 2011)

5.4 Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the emerging replacement local plan.

### **Core Strategy (2013)**

5.5 The Core Strategy is a strategic planning document. Key policies of the Core Strategy considered to be relevant to the determination of this application include:

- Policy CS1 – High Quality Design;
- Policy CS4A – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development;
- Policy CS5 – Location of Development; and,
- Policy CS14 – Town Centres and Retail.

### **Policies, Sites and Places DPD (2017)**

5.6 Key policies of the Policies, Sites and Places DPD considered to be relevant to the determination of this application include:

- Policy PSP1 – Local Distinctiveness;
- Policy PSP8 – Residential Amenity;

- Policy PSP11 – Transport Impact Management;
- Policy PSP31 – Town Centre Uses;
- Policy PSP33 – Shopping Frontages;

### **Material Considerations**

- 5.7 The NPPF was most recently updated in December 2023 and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The relevant paragraphs within the NPPF are set out below. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration.
- 5.8 The NPPF sets out at its heart a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 8, identifies three facets of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, noting that they are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The social objective seeks to ensure that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.
- 5.9 Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible.
- 5.10 Section 6 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Paragraph 85 notes that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 5.11 Section 7 seeks to ensure the vitality of town centres. Paragraph 90 recognises that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. It goes on to clarify that town centres should be allowed to grow and diversify and that suitable sites in town centres should be identified to meet future needs.
- 5.12 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is developed but not allocated for specific purposes to help meet identified needs.

### **Emerging Local Plan**

- 5.13 The emerging New Local Plan for South Gloucestershire is at an early stage and as such is given little weight at this point in the determination of planning applications.

## 6.0 Planning Considerations

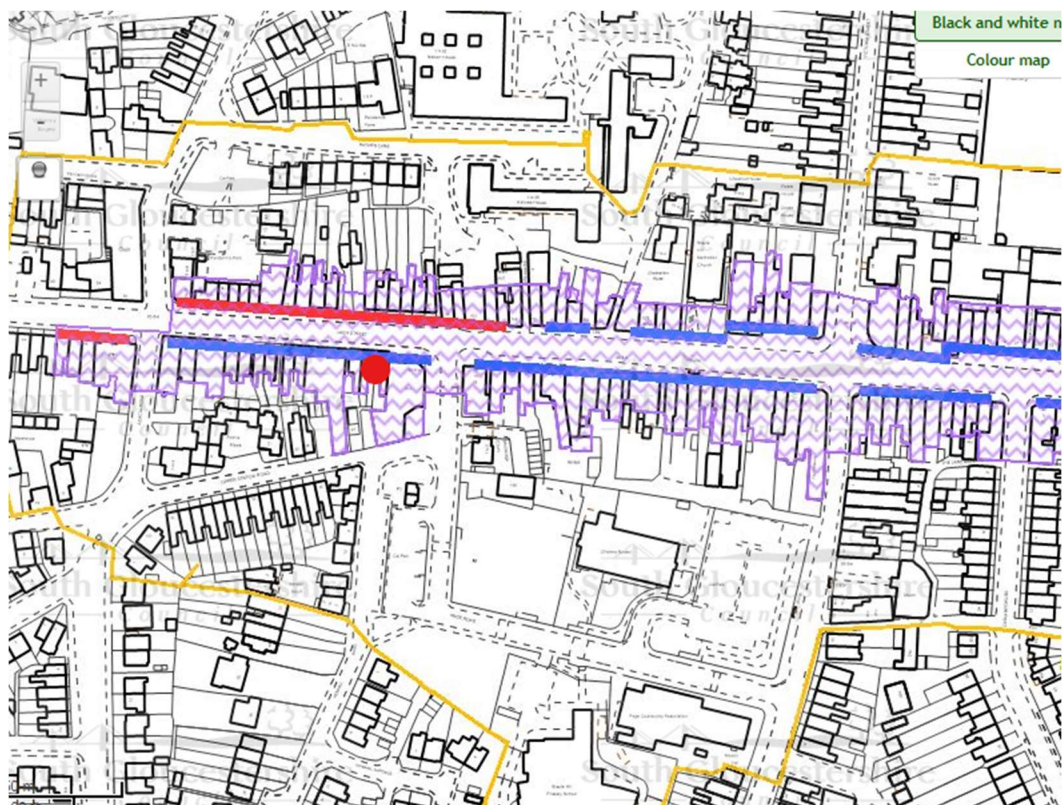
### Introduction

6.1 This section of the statement assesses the principle of the use of 82A as a small office within Class E(g)(i), consideration is also given to residential amenity, transport and community benefits.

### Principle of Use

6.2 The application relates to the change of use of the upper floors of the property only to office use.

6.3 Policy CS5 of the development plan confirms the town centre status of Staple Hill and that the centre in terms of its role and function provides a 'High Street shopping and service centre' function. Policy CS14 encourages development and investment in town centre locations. Policy PSP31 of the adopted local plan relates to main town centre and retail uses, confirming that such uses, including offices such as that proposed in this application, should be directed to designated town and district centres as identified on the Policies Map. An extract of the adopted policies map is provided at Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Extract of South Gloucestershire Policy Map (application site identified by red dot)**

6.4 The Policies Map confirms that the application site is located within the Staple Hill town centre boundary, as well as being within the Primary Shopping Area and forming part of the Primary Shopping Frontage.

- 6.5 It is clear the proposed office use of No 82A High Street is exactly the type of location where such development should be encouraged and supported in accord with Policy CS5 of the development plan. Whilst small-scale, the provision of additional office floorspace within the town centre, will make a valuable contribution to the mix of employment opportunities in a sustainable location and fully accords with Policy PSP31 of the development plan as well as Paragraph 85 of the NPPF. Moreover, Policy PSP31 specifically makes reference to development proposals seeking to make viable and positive uses of upper floors (Part 12 criterion vii). The use of the currently vacant maisonette to provide office space for a small local business will make a positive contribution to Staple Hill Town Centre.
- 6.6 As noted above, it is the use of the upper floors for offices that is proposed. The ground floor will remain in retail use. This mix of uses proposed aligns with the requirements of Policy PSP33 which seeks to retain active ground floor frontages within the designated town centres, particularly in primary shopping frontages. The proposed change of use of the upper floors only will allow the unit to continue to make a positive and active contribution to the vitality and viability of the town centre as required by Policies CS5 and PSP33 of the development plan as well as Paragraph 90 of the NPPF and that the active frontage is maintained in accord with Policy PSP33.
- 6.7 In light of the above, the principle of the employment use (Class E(g)(i)) on the upper floors at the application site is acceptable. It is policy compliant, according with the adopted local plan, notably Policies CS5, CS14, PSP31 and PSP33 as well as NPPF provisions. It fundamentally represents sustainable development in accord with Policy CS4A of the development plan and Paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

### **Residential Amenity**

- 6.8 Policy PSP8 of the development plan seeks to protect the amenity of existing residents through ensuring that new development does not result in an unacceptable living conditions or have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of nearby properties.
- 6.9 The property is an upper floor maisonette located above a retail unit and adjacent to other retail and commercial units, including a public house. This is a town centre location where, as discussed above, office uses are expected and acceptable in principle.
- 6.10 The proposed use of the property as a small office will not result in a level or nature of activity that would result in any adverse impact on the amenity enjoyed by nearby properties.
- 6.11 There are no changes proposed to the exterior of the property and therefore the existing physical relationship with neighbours will be unchanged.
- 6.12 The proposed internal layout is retained, with existing rooms simply repurposed to provide office floorspace.
- 6.13 In light of the above, the proposal will not harm the amenity of any neighbouring residents in full accordance with Policy PSP8 of the development plan.

## **Design**

- 6.14 As noted above, there are no external changes proposed to the property, the change from the maisonette to an office would be imperceptible from outside the property. As such there will be no impact on the character or appearance of the building. Indeed, ensuring the active and viable use of the building will facilitate its upkeep and continued positive contribution to the street in accord with Policies CS1 and PSP1 of the development plan.

## **Transport Considerations**

- 6.15 Policy PSP11 of the development plan seeks to promote development that minimises the need to travel and encourages improved accessibility. In regard to commercial uses, the Policy is supportive of such uses where they are located on safe, usable walking routes accessible to bus services and public transport.
- 6.16 The proposed office use is small scale and is located in a highly sustainable and accessible town centre location with good access to public transport. It is in precisely the kind of location that development plan policies direct uses of this kind to.
- 6.17 The small level of office floorspace proposed would not generate a level of traffic that would create or contribute to congestion or have an unacceptable effect on highway safety.
- 6.18 There is no car parking on site, this is not uncommon in town centre locations such as the application site. In this regard it should be noted that the current maisonette does not benefit from car parking. However, there is plentiful public car parking in the town centre, including within a short walk of the application site on Page Road.
- 6.19 In conclusion, the proposal will not give rise to any harmful transport or parking impacts. Accordingly, the proposal accords with Policies PSP11 of the adopted development plan.

## 7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the existing maisonette at 82A High Street, Staple Hill to offices (Class E(g)(i)). The existing ground floor retail unit will be retained. No physical changes are proposed to the property.
- 7.2 When assessed against policies in the development plan and national guidance in the NPPF, it is clear that the application proposal is acceptable and represents sustainable development. In summary, this statement concludes that the application proposal:
- Is an acceptable use in principle in a town centre location;
  - Will not harm the amenities of nearby residential occupiers;
  - Will preserve the character and appearance of the area; and,
  - Will not give rise to adverse highways impacts.
- 7.3 The proposal is in full accordance with the pertinent policies of the development plan, as well as guidance in the NPPF. As such, the application should be approved without delay in accordance with Paragraph 47 of the NPPF.
- 7.4 In light of the above, we trust that the Council will be readily able to grant planning permission for this policy compliant proposal.



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