

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

12th August 2015

Planning Application 2015/065/FUL

Change of use of existing Victorian two storey office unit to two bedroom mews house.

Harris & Associate Surveyors Limited, British Mills, Prospect Hill, Riverside, Redditch, Worcestershire, B97 4BY

Applicant: Mr J Harris
Expiry Date: 6th July 2015 extended 13 August 2015
Ward: ABBEY

(see additional papers for Site Plan)

The author of this report is Sharron Williams, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 534061 Email: sharron.williams@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

Site comprises of an existing 2 storey building that has been used as office accommodation. The application site is within an area designated for Primarily Employment Uses in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 3 and the emerging Local Plan No. 4.

To the front and side of the site are the mill buildings 'British Mills' that are grade II listed. The buildings concerned are a mix of uses such as Class B1, B8 use as well as residential. To the rear of the site is Osprey House which is currently occupied by NEW College and used for educational purposes.

Proposal Description

It is proposed to change the use of the building to a 2 bedroom dwelling. The only external alterations would be changing the front door from a glazed door to a solid one. Other works for the change of use would be internal and include stud walls to subdivide the first floor into two bedrooms.

Relevant Policies:

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3:

EEMP03 Primarily Employment Areas
EEMP3A Development Affecting Primarily Employment Areas
BBE13 Qualities of Good Design
CS07 The Sustainable Location of Development

Emerging Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4

Policy 24: Development within Primarily Employment Areas
Policy 36: Historic Environment
Policy: 39 Built Environment

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Policy: 40 High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Others:

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance
SPG Encouraging Good Design

Relevant Planning History

2005/524/FUL	Conversion Of Former Needle Mill To 2 No. 2 Bed Apartments	Approved	21.03.2006
2005/558/LBC	Conversion Of Former Needle Mill To 2 No. 2 Bed Apartments	Approved	21.03.2006
2005/018/LBC	Listed Building Application - Amended Application To Form Eighteen Apartments	Approved	15.07.2005
2005/019/FUL	Amended Application To Form Eighteen Apartments	Approved	15.07.2005

Consultations

Highway Network Control

No objections.

Conservation Advisor

See no issues with the proposal in terms of its impact on the existing building and am happy to support it.

Public Consultation Response

No comments submitted.

Assessment of Proposal

The proposal is for the conversion of a two storey office building into a 2 bedroom dwelling. The property forms part of the British Mills complex but is detached from the main building and as such is located within the setting of the listed building but is not listed in itself.

The site is within an area designated for employment use within the existing and emerging Redditch Local Plan. However, it is important to be aware of the following historic decisions that have been approved close to the site:-

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British Mills (site to the side of the application site)

A residential scheme for 14 apartments was considered at Planning Committee in August 2004. At the time the site was within the Town Centre Peripheral Zone in Local Plan No. 2 but was designated as Primarily Employment land in the draft Local Plan No. 3. At the time of considering the application the draft Local Plan No.3 was at very early stages, and as such carried very little weight as a material consideration. The application was considered favourably by members subject to a S106 Agreement. Although the application had been considered favourably, no progress was made on the S106 and was later disposed of with no decision issued. In 2005 a subsequent application was submitted for the same sort of development but the number of units increased from 14 to 18 (refs 2015/018 and 2015/019). Given that the principle of the development had been considered favourably in August 2004, the development was approved.

Studio 1 & 2 British Mills (site in front of the application site)

This development was a conversion to 2 No. two bedroom apartments (refs 2005/524 and 2005/558). Again the site concerned was part of the Town Centre Peripheral Zone meaning that a mix of uses could be considered including residential / commercial etc. However, the draft Local Plan No. 3 had progressed and therefore, was a material consideration for the 2 apartments. The applicant was requested to supply information to address requirements set out in policy E(EMP).3 in order to justify a residential use in a Primarily Employment location. Information supplied indicated that the site had been marketed with very little interest due to it being too small, on too many levels, with no high street presence etc.

Officers considered the information submitted and also that the building concerned was listed which ultimately restricts Class B uses due to the layout / design of the building. At the time the surrounding uses were generally B1 and B8 use. The application was considered favourably by members as it was felt that the proposed use would not compromise the adjoining uses.

Bordesley Chambers, 1 Albert Street

Permission was sought to change the use of the first and second floor offices to a self-contained flat (refs: 2012/060 and 2012/067). Again, the site concerned is within the same designation in the adopted Local Plan No.3. As with above, policy E(EMP).3 of the Local Plan would apply.

Details submitted with the application clarified that the property had been converted from a dwelling to offices in the mid-20th century, but the second floor had been vacant for the last 30 years.

The applicant was requested to supply information to address the requirements of policy E(EMP).3. Information submitted confirmed that the first and second floors had been marketed for 3 years without success. It was considered that a good effort had been made to market the premises. It was also important to bear in mind that given the site was previously a dwelling; the layout of the premises may not be as practical for office

purposes in comparison to an open plan purpose built office building. It was considered that the agent had adequately addressed this aspect of policy E(EMP).3. In addition, the buildings in the immediate vicinity were generally office uses with residential nearby. Therefore, the use would be compatible with the existing surrounding employment uses. The application was approved July 2012.

The current application site

The site is within an area designated for Primarily Employment Use in Local Plan No.3 and the emerging Local Plan No.4. Policy E(EMP).3 would apply and states that non-employment development within Primarily Employment Areas will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that the loss of the site will not have an unacceptable loss on the supply of employment land within the Borough and that the use would be compatible with the use of adjacent land. Information submitted by the applicant clarifies that there is a mix of uses in close proximity to the site and that at the present time, the possibility of letting / selling the premises for another employment use is unlikely due to the size of the unit and its cramped configuration over two floors. Details confirming the length of time marketing the premises for employment use have not been supplied so far.

Policy E(EMP).3a would also apply which requires development to be compatible with the use of Primarily Employment Areas. The current surrounding uses in the immediate vicinity of the application site are generally office uses / residential / education. Therefore, a change of use to residential in this particular building, in this particular location would not conflict with the existing surrounding employment uses, and as such would comply with this policy.

The NPPF states that the long term protection of sites allocated for employment uses where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose should be avoided and that applications for alternative uses of land or buildings should be treated on their merits having regard to market signals and the relative need for different land uses to support sustainable local communities.

It is also important to note that under the General Permitted Development Order, it is now permitted development to convert Class B.1 (a) offices to Class C3 dwellinghouse, subject to restrictions which includes *buildings that are listed or within the curtilage of a listed building*. Officers would advise that this proposal would actually be permitted development and only requires planning permission due to it being within the curtilage of a listed building.

To conclude it is unlikely that the change of use would undermine the principles set out in policy E(EMP).3 of Local Plan No. 3 and policy 24 of the emerging Local Plan No.4 taking into account historic decisions approved in the vicinity and that the development is unlikely to conflict with the remaining employment uses in the area. It would seem that due to the size of the unit, market interest to use the building for employment purposes is limited. Therefore, in order to retain a heritage asset in the area, and in line with the

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NPPF, the unit should not be protected but instead an alternative use be considered. On balance the proposal is considered to be acceptable on this occasion.

RECOMMENDATION:

That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

- 1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of the grant of this permission.

Reason:- In accordance with the requirements of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2) The development hereby approved shall be implemented in accordance with the following plans:

Existing plans and elevations	Dwg. No. 278-01-15-01	dated 28.11.14
Proposed plans and elevations	Dwg. No. 278-01-15-02	dated 28.11.14

Reason: To accurately define the permission for the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is satisfactory in appearance in order to safeguard the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

Informatives

- 1) The local planning authority has worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seek solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with this planning application through negotiation and amendment.

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the approval of the application would not fully comply with policies of the statutory development plan, and it was considered appropriate by the Head of Planning and Regeneration that members consider the application.