

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

18th July 2024

Planning Application 24/00503/FUL

Internal alterations to create 1No. ground floor 1-bedroom/2-person and 1No. first floor 2-bedroom/3-person flat.

76 Eathorpe Close, Redditch, Worcestershire, B98 0HQ, ,

**Applicant: Mr Gary Waring
Ward: Matchborough And Woodrow**

(see additional papers for site plan)

The case officer of this application is Charlotte Wood, Planning Officer (DM), who can be contacted on Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3412 Email: Charlotte.Wood@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk for more information.

Site Description

The application site is a 1970's two storey terraced property which lies within Eathorpe Close and forms part of the residential area of Matchborough. To the north of Eathorpe Close lies Ipsley Brook and in close proximity to the east is Matchborough First and to the west is The Kingfisher School.

Eathorpe Close is formed of uniform terraced properties laid out in a linear, planned arrangement. Number 76 Eathorpe Close is a middle terrace, attached to numbers 77 and 75 to the north and south, respectively, and also attached to number 74 to the west by a first floor clad link which has a walkway beneath. The property benefits from a rear garden area on the eastern side which directly abuts a shared parking area. There is a further row of shared parking to the south of the site.

Proposal Description

The property is currently a single four bedroom dwelling, however this application proposes alterations to subdivide the dwelling into a one bedroom flat at ground floor and a two bedroomed flat at first floor level. Few alterations are required to convert the building to flats. Externally, a new front door accessed off the public footpath would be introduced, which would replace an existing window. Internally the stairs leading to the first floor would be enclosed and there would be some internal reconfiguration to create the new living arrangements. The supporting statement provided with the application confirms that the separating floor between the two flats would have acoustic insulation to comply with Building Regulations.

Access to the rear garden space for the ground floor flat would be by the rear dining room door and access for the first floor flat would be by the rear garden gate.

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The supporting statement also sets out that the proposal has been designed in accordance with current Building Regulations, 'Secure by Design' principles and Code for Sustainable Homes.

Relevant Policies :

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No. 4

Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

Policy 2: Settlement Hierarchy

Policy 5: Effective and Efficient use of Land

Policy 19: Sustainable travel and Accessibility

Policy 20: Transport Requirements for New Development

Policy 39: Built Environment

Policy 40: High Quality Design and Safer Communities

Others

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

National Planning Practice Guidance

Redditch High Quality Design SPD

Relevant Planning History

No Relevant Planning History

Consultations

Highways Redditch

No highways objections raised, however a condition for cycle parking provision has been recommended.

Public Consultation Response

Three neighbour letters were sent in relation to this application; however no representations from members of the public have been received.

Cllr Jane Spilsbury

Requested that the application is considered at planning committee due to the potential highways and parking implications of the proposal.

Assessment of Proposal

Principle of Development

The site is shown as "white land" on the Borough of Redditch Local Plan Proposals Map, indicating that it lies within the main urban area of Redditch. Policy 2 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan no. 4 (BORLP 4) states that Redditch urban area, as the main

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settlement shall be the focus for development as it provides the highest level of services and facilities and offers the most sustainable location. The principle of new residential development or in this case, the subdivision of one dwelling into two flats is therefore acceptable in this location subject to other considerations including character and appearance, residential amenity and highway matters.

Regard should also be had to nationally described space standards set out in the Department for Communities and Local Government's Technical Housing Standards. This document provides minimum internal floor space standards for dwellings of all types and tenures. A one bedroom flat should have a minimum floor area of 39 square metres and a two bedroomed flat should have a minimum floor area of 61 square metres.

In the case of the current proposal, the one bedroom flat at ground floor would measure 49 square metres and would therefore exceed the described space standard. The proposed two bedroom flat would measure 56 square metres and would therefore be slightly under the required standard. Whilst regard is given to the technical housing standards, this document does not form part of the development plan as they have not been adopted as part of a policy in the local plan. In view of this, the standards are given reduced weight. Furthermore, all the necessary facilities for day-to-day living have been provided within the flats and the open plan layout creates a more spacious feel. Whilst the second bedroom within the proposed first floor flat is small, it would be suitable for a child. Unlike some flat developments, outdoor space is also available for the occupiers.

Having regard to the above considerations, the principle of development is supported by officers.

Character and Appearance

Policy 5 of BoRLP4 states that efficient use of land should be sought in new development schemes and Policy 39 of the BoRLP4 echoes this requirement but also states that development should contribute positively to the surrounding environment. Similarly, Policy 40 of the Local Plan expects development to be of a high quality design that reflects or complements local surroundings and materials.

The site is situated within a dense housing estate where the properties are uniform and simple in their appearance with small windows, shallow pitched roofs and white cladded front porches. It is noted that the application site comprises a dwelling that is slightly larger than others due to its first floor link structure which most of the other properties do not have. As the external alterations required to facilitate the subdivision are minor, including the additional new front door, the development would both make efficient use of land whilst also positively contributing to and complementing the local surroundings, in accordance with Policies 5, 39 and 40 of the BoRLP 4.

Residential Amenity

Paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should seek a good standard of amenity for existing and future users of land and buildings. Furthermore, the Borough of Redditch High Quality Design SPD provides

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further guidance in relation to residential amenity, seeking to protect against adverse loss of light, outlook, privacy and overbearing impact.

Given that there would be no extensions to the building as part of the subdivision, there would be no negative impact through loss of light, outlook or overbearing impact. There would also be no additional windows inserted into the building, only the new front door and the windows that currently serve habitable rooms would continue to serve habitable rooms. In view of this there would be no detrimental impact to privacy arising as a result of the proposed development.

The amenity space would be shared between the occupiers of the two flats and would offer a garden of 10 metres in length and 85 square metres in area. The Borough of Redditch High Quality Design SPD (2019) specifies that dwellings should have a garden length of 10.5 metres and an area of 70 sq metres, however the document states that a more flexible approach should be taken with communal amenity space for flats. The SPD also states that amenity space should be suitably sited and in scale with the plot, surroundings and reflect the existing local density. Whilst the shared garden area would be modest, it would reflect the local surroundings and building to plot densities. Given that both flats would benefit from access to outdoor space, and in view of the modest size of the new units and also the relatively close proximity of the site to a public area of open space, the proposed amenity space is considered acceptable.

Based on the above assessment, the proposal raises no concerns in relation to residential amenity.

Highways

Policy 19 of the BoRLP4 encourages development in accessible locations, reducing the need to travel by car and Policy 20 of the BoRLP4 sets out a number of transport requirements for new development including parking standards. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states that 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.

The Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal and has noted that the host property, similar to all other dwellings in the area, has communal courtyard parking. This pre-existing arrangement will remain the same for the converted flats and the Highways Officer has confirmed that he considers this acceptable in this instance. Having regard to the car parking space standards set out in Worcestershire County Council's Streetscape Design Guide, a one-bedroomed flat should provide one parking space and a two-bedroomed flat should provide two parking spaces, totalling an overall provision of three spaces. With regards to the existing four-bedroomed dwelling, this requires a total of three spaces also. Therefore, whilst the parking area is shared with other dwellings, the parking space requirement for the proposal site would not change as a result of the development and should not have a material impact on local parking pressure.

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As noted earlier in the report, the site is also considered to be in a sustainable and accessible location. Future occupiers would be able to walk to facilities such as schools, a nursery, pharmacy, church, pub, shop and takeaways. The site is also in close proximity to bus stops which offer a regular service to Redditch Town Centre. The future occupiers would therefore be able to carry out day to day living and get to places of work without the need of a car.

Given the nearby shared parking area and the sustainable location of the site, the proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with Policy 19 and Policy 20 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan no. 4. Having regard to paragraph 115 of the NPPF there are also no unacceptable highway safety impacts or severe impacts on the road network resulting from the proposal that would warrant refusal of the application. The Highways Officer has, however, recommended a condition for the provision of cycle parking facilities should planning permission be granted.

Other Matters

No other technical matters have been raised during the course of this application.

Cllr Spilsbury the local ward member raised concerns that parking is limited within the local area and the proposed two flats would likely generate more vehicles than the existing dwelling. This matter has been considered above, where it has been concluded that the proposed flats should generate the same number of vehicles as the existing four-bedroomed dwelling and therefore should not affect the existing parking arrangements. Furthermore it is not considered that the proposal would lead to any unacceptable highways impact that would warrant refusal of this application.

Conclusion

The proposal would create an additional residential unit which would make a valuable contribution towards Redditch's housing stock and would make efficient use of land, as supported by Policy 5 of the BoRLP 4. The proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and external alterations would be relatively minor and would be in keeping with the local surroundings. In view of the minor changes to the exterior of the property, there would be no detrimental impact to residential amenity of neighbours. In view of the provision of outdoor space shared between the two flats, it would provide a good standard of amenity for the future occupiers. Whilst no private parking is provided for the new flats, this is a pre-existing situation, and the proposed flats should not place a greater strain on the shared parking areas than the existing dwelling. The site also lies in an accessible location to services which can be reached by foot or public transport. No objections have been received from technical consultees and no objections have been received from neighbouring residents.

Therefore, having regard to all material planning considerations, including those raised by the local ward member, it is considered that planning permission should be granted subject to conditions.

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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 carried out in accordance with the following plans and drawings:

Site Location/Block Plan at scale 1:500 - job no. 24/30 drawing no. 01
Proposed Floor Plans & Elevations - job no. 24/30 drawing no. 03

Reason: To provide certainty to the extent of the development hereby approved in the interests of proper planning.

- 3) The Development hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until sheltered and secure cycle parking for one bicycle for the one-bedroom flat and two bicycles for the two-bedroom flat had been provided on site. Thereafter the cycle parking shall be kept available for the parking of bicycles only.

Reason: To comply with the Worcestershire County Council's streetscape design guide.

Procedural Matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee at the request of the local ward councillor.