

## WINDSOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL

11 October 2017

Item: 4

<b>Application No.:</b>	17/02383/FULL
<b>Location:</b>	The ACT Foundation 61 Thames Street Windsor SL4 1QW
<b>Proposal:</b>	Conversion of existing B1 offices to provide 4 x residential apartments, including use of existing roof terrace with enlarged 4th floor, and associated parking, amenity space and landscaping
<b>Applicant:</b>	The ACT Foundation
<b>Agent:</b>	Miss Emily Brooker
<b>Parish/Ward:</b>	Windsor Unparished/Eton With Windsor Castle Ward
<b>If you have a question about this report, please contact:</b> Charlotte Goff on 01628 685729 or at <a href="mailto:charlotte.goff@rbwm.gov.uk">charlotte.goff@rbwm.gov.uk</a>	

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<b>Location:</b>	The ACT Foundation 61 Thames Street Windsor SL4 1QW
<b>Proposal:</b>	Consent for conversion of existing B1 offices to provide 4 x residential apartments, including use of existing roof terrace with enlarged 4th floor, and associated parking, amenity space and landscaping
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### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This application seeks planning and listed building consent for the change of use of the existing Grade II listed B1 offices to provide 4 residential apartments (1 x 1 bed and 3 x 2 bed). With regards to the loss of employment use as part of the proposals, the site is not located within any identified employment land and therefore, the Councils policies do not restrict the loss of office accommodation in this location. Furthermore, Policy H6 supports the further addition of residential accommodation within town centres and states that the conversion of vacant offices to residential will be encouraged. By reason of such, the loss of the office and proposed residential accommodation is considered acceptable.
- 1.2 With regards to the impact of the proposals on the listed building, it is evident from the history of this site, that little of the historic fabric and plan layout of the building remains. No objection is raised to the reversion of the building back to residential, which was its original constructed use. In terms of the alterations proposed to the exterior and interior with the addition of a roof terrace and replacement windows, these alterations are considered acceptable in the context of the site and to not have a detrimental impact on the historic character and appearance of the listed building or surrounding conservation area.
- 1.3 6 car parking spaces are provided to the rear which complies with the Councils parking strategy and in terms of the impact to the surrounding residential occupiers, given that the surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character, the scheme is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the amenities of any nearby occupants.

**It is recommended the Panel grants planning permission with the conditions listed in Section 9 of this report.**

## 2. REASON FOR PANEL DETERMINATION

- The Council's Constitution does not give the Head of Planning delegated powers to determine the application in the way recommended; such decisions can only be made by the Panel.

## 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 61 Thames Street is a four storey office building with a roof top plant room and external terraced area located within Windsor Town Centre Conservation Area and the property is Grade II listed. To the rear of the site there is a courtyard area, which is currently paved and provides 8No. parking spaces for the existing offices, as well as a right of way for the adjacent offices in Gainsborough House.

## 4. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL AND ANY RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 This application seeks consent for the change of use of the existing B1 offices to provide 4 residential units (1No. one bedroomed apartment and 3No. two bedroomed apartments). The proposals include the use of the existing roof terrace as amenity space for the third floor apartment, which will also entail the enlargement at roof level of the existing plant room. Parking is proposed to the rear of the site, utilising the existing parking spaces allocated to the office use. Externally it is proposed to maintain the appearance of the existing facades
- 4.2 There have been a number of planning applications associated with this site, the most relevant of which are listed below. There is also an accompanying listed building consent application and the assessment of this application is provided within paragraphs 6.5-6.8:

Ref.	Description	Decision and Date
00/80051/FULL	Demolition of existing front facade and construction of new front facade	Permitted 22.12.2000
00/80052/LBC	Demolition of existing front facade and construction of new front facade.	Permitted 22.12.2000

The relevance of this application to the current proposal is elaborated on within the assessment below, however in brief, the proposals provided some relevant commentary in respect of the history and significance of various parts of the building.

## 5. MAIN RELEVANT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES RELEVANT TO THE DECISION

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework Sections 7 and 12

### Royal Borough Local Plan

- 5.2 The main strategic planning considerations applying to the site and the associated policies are:

Within settlement area	Highways and Parking	Conservation and listed building	Impact to residents
DG1, H6, N2	P4, T5	CA1, CA2, LB3	NAP3

These policies can be found at

[https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/downloads/download/154/local\\_plan\\_documents\\_and\\_appendices](https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/downloads/download/154/local_plan_documents_and_appendices)

**Borough Local Plan: Submission Version**

Issue	Local Plan Policy
Design in keeping with character and appearance of area	SP2, SP3
Manages flood risk and waterways	NR1

The NPPF sets out that decision-makers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to their stage of preparation. The Borough Local Plan Proposed Submission Document was published in June 2017. Public consultation runs from 30 June to 26 August 2017 with the intention to submit the Plan to the Planning Inspectorate in October 2017. In this context, the Borough Local Plan: Submission Version is a material consideration, but limited weight is afforded to this document at this time.

This document can be found at:

<http://rbwm.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s14392/Appendix%20A%20-%20Borough%20Local%20Plan%20Submission%20Version.pdf>

### **Supplementary planning documents**

5.3 Supplementary planning documents adopted by the Council relevant to the proposal are:

- The Interpretation of Policy F1 (Area Liable to Flooding) Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 2004

More information on these documents can be found at:

[https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200414/local\\_development\\_framework/494/supplementary\\_planning](https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200414/local_development_framework/494/supplementary_planning)

## **6. EXPLANATION OF RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 The key issues for consideration are:

- i The loss of office/employment space
- ii Assessment of application 17/02384/LBC and the impact of the proposal on the character and setting of the Listed Building
- iii Design and impact on the Conservation Area
- iv Highways and parking implications
- v Impact to surrounding residential occupants.
- vi. Quality of residential accommodation proposed.

### **Loss of employment land/office space and housing mix**

6.2 Policy E5 restricts the loss of employment uses within the boroughs designated employment areas. The building is currently in use as B1 offices and this proposal seeks to change the use of the building to residential. The site is not located within any identified employment land and sits at the southern end of Thames Street. Given the location of the building, the Councils policies do not restrict the loss of office accommodation in such locations. Moreover, policy H6 also supports the addition of further residential accommodation within town and other settlement centres, and states that the conversion of vacant offices to residential will be encouraged.

6.3 Furthermore, as the building is listed, Policy LB3 requires that listed buildings are used for the purposes that will secure their long term future and which will preserve or enhance their physical fabric, setting, special character and interest. National and Local policy recognise that the best use for an historic building, is the one for which it was originally designed. The Conservation

Officer has reviewed the proposal and as the building was most probably residential in its primary form, the proposal would revert it back to such use, to which no objection is raised.

- 6.4 Overall, it is considered that the principle of converting the building from offices to residential use is acceptable. In terms of the housing mix proposed, Policy H8 states that the Council will support schemes that meet a range of housing accommodation and will favour dwellings for smaller households. The proposed residential units are therefore considered to comply with this policy.

#### **Assessment of application 17/02784/LBC and impact on the listed building**

- 6.5 The Council has had special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, as required under Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 6.6 It was noted during application 00/80051/FULL for a replacement facade of the building that permission was granted in 1979 for the part demolition and refurbishment of the listed building. The Conservation Officer dealing with this application stated that once works had been carried out to replace the facade of the building that there would be little if any historic structure remaining and that the building should be delisted as a result.
- 6.7 It is evident from the history of the site and site visit, that little of the historic building remains. No objection would therefore be raised to the proposed change of use to a residential use given that the building would be reverting back to its original use, which is supported by the Council's Adopted policies. In terms of the internal alterations proposed, as there is little historic fabric remaining at the site, no objection is raised to the internal alterations proposed to facilitate the development. It is noted that no additional openings are proposed however the proposals include the replacement of the existing windows on a like for like basis. The only other additions to the external facade are the small vents/flues to the front and rear elevations and the addition of a roof top lounge. The existing air conditioning units that currently exist at roof level are to be removed, which is welcomed.
- 6.8 The proposed alterations to the building have been reviewed and considered by the Council's Conservation Officer and no objection is raised to the proposed alterations given the aforementioned history of the site. The enlargement at roof level by reason of its siting, modest scale and massing is not considered to detract from the special architectural character and setting of the building. Overall, the proposal is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the listed building.

#### **Design and impact on the Conservation Area**

- 6.9 Policy N2 seeks to ensure that development that would adversely affect the setting and character of the river in both urban and rural locations is restricted. It is proposed at roof level, to enlarge the existing roof top plant and communal stair enclosure. This extension has been designed so that it remains set back from the side elevation of the building. The side elevation of the building is partially visible from Datchet Road to the south, however, as a result of the design of the extension, its scale, massing, set back from the side, front and rear elevations, and height/density of the existing and surrounding development, it is not considered to appear highly prominent in view from the surrounding Conservation Area, nor to detract from the character, appearance and setting of the building within the Conservation Area.
- 6.10 The proposed replacement windows are considered acceptable given that these are to be replaced on a like for like basis. Similarly, the proposed improvements to the paving of the rear courtyard and general layout of this area, will not be highly prominent in view from the surrounding area and are considered to enhance the character and appearance of this part of the building. Given such, the proposal is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 6.11 With regards to the proposed roof terrace, no additional railings are proposed around this space and given the modest size of this space, and that it is intended for the private use of the occupants of the third floor flat, it is not considered that the use of this roof space as an amenity area will appear out of character within the Conservation Area.

### **Highways and parking considerations**

- 6.12 The site has existing off street parking to the rear which is accessed from Farm Yard. At present there are parking spaces marked out for 6 vehicles to park. The development provides each unit with 1 car parking space which complies with the Councils Parking Strategy.
- 6.13 In terms of cycle parking provision, the scheme provides a cycle store to accommodate 4 cycles to which no objection is raised. The Highways Officer has raised concern the internal dimensions of this store appear a little constrained to accommodate 4 cycles and a condition is recommended on any consent to secure the detailed design of this space.
- 6.14 With regards to refuse, this has been discussed with the Councils Waste Management Team. Given the constraints of the site, a refuse strategy has been agreed with them which will see residual waste and recyclable waste sacks provided to residents.

### **Impact on surrounding residential occupants**

- 6.15 The buildings surrounding the site are mixture of commercial and residential in nature. The proposed change of use is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the amenities of these surrounding occupants. With regards to the roof terrace, having stood within this area, it is evident that the surrounding area it overlooks is predominantly commercial in nature. Also in an urban location such as this, a higher degree of overlooking would be expected. Given such, the proposed use of this as a residential terrace is not considered to give rise to an unacceptable degree of overlooking.

### **Quality of residential accommodation**

- 6.16 The units proposed as part of this application are of a layout and design that is considered to present a suitable standard of accommodation. The outlook from the ground floor unit to the rear and its relationship with the car parking area has been addressed through the inclusion of defensible space between the rear windows and parking area. Furthermore, the car parking has been orientated in such a way that the spaces will be parallel to the windows, which should avoid undue disturbance from headlights. Overall, it is considered that the quality of the accommodation proposed is acceptable.

## **7. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT**

### **Comments from interested parties**

12 occupiers were notified directly of the application.

The planning officer posted a notice advertising the application at the site on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2017

No letters were received from this consultation.

### **Consultees responses**

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Where in the report this is considered</b>
Conservation Officer	No objection. The drawings clearly clarify the single glazed units and their design to match the existing. There are no further comments that I wish to make and the only conditions	6.5-6.8

	I would ask for are the standard time limit and approved plans.	
Waste Officer	No objection to proposed waste strategy	6.14
Highways Officer	<p>Presently, the site benefits from 6 car parking spaces and not the 8 as indicated in the accompanying plans.</p> <p>The development comprising 1 x 1 bed and 3 x 2 bed apartments and provides each unit with 1 car parking spaces. This complies with the Borough's Parking Strategy (2004). With regard to cycle provision the applicant proposes installing a cycle store for the remaining 5<sup>th</sup> parking bay. The internal dimension of the store appears quite constrained to accommodate 4 cycles.</p> <p>Therefore, we recommend the submission of a detailed plan of this storage facility.</p> <p>The refuse strategy remains unchanged. The Transport Statement reports that a refuse collection strategy has been agreed with the RBWM waste management team which will see residual waste and recyclable waste sacks provided to residents.</p> <p>In highway terms the proposal raises no concerns If the Planning Authority is minded to approve the application we recommend the inclusion of the following condition: Cycle parking to be provided</p>	6.12-6.14

## 8. APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT

- Appendix A - Site location plan and site layout
- Appendix B – plan and elevation drawings

## 9. CONDITIONS RECOMMENDED FOR INCLUSION IF PERMISSION IS GRANTED REASONS

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within three years from the date of this permission.  
Reason: To accord with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 2 The materials to be used on the external surfaces of the development shall be in accordance with those specified in the application unless any different materials are first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.  
Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Relevant Policies - Local Plan DG1.
- 3 No part of the development shall be occupied until vehicle parking space has been provided in accordance with the approved drawing. The space approved shall be retained for parking in association with the development.  
Reason: To ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities in order to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking which could be detrimental to the free flow of traffic and to highway safety. Relevant Policies - Local Plan P4, DG1.

- 4 No part of the development shall be occupied until covered and secure cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These facilities shall thereafter be kept available for the parking of cycles in association with the development at all times.  
Reason: To ensure that the development is provided with adequate parking facilities in order to encourage the use of alternative modes of transport. Relevant Policies - Local Plan T7, DG1
- 5 No part of the development shall be occupied until the refuse bin storage area and recycling facilities have been provided in accordance with the approved drawing. These facilities shall be kept available for use in association with the development at all times.  
Reason: To ensure that the development is provided with adequate facilities that allow it to be serviced in a manner which would not adversely affect the free flow of traffic and highway safety and to ensure the sustainability of the development. Relevant Policies - Local Plan T5, DG1.
- 6 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below.  
Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved particulars and plans.

### **Informatives**

- 1 Whilst it is noted that cycle parking is shown on the proposed drawings, there is concern that the proposed size of the store is insufficient to accommodate the four cycles proposed. Therefore condition 4 has been added to secure plans of the detailed layout and design of this store.

### **Conditions for 17/02483/LBC**

- 1 The works/demolition shall commence not later than three years from the date of this consent.  
Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) and to avoid unimplemented consents remaining effective after such lapse of time that relevant considerations may have changed.
- 2 The materials to be used on the external surfaces of the development shall be in accordance with those specified in the application unless any different materials are first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.  
Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the area. Relevant Policies - Local Plan DG1.
- 3 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed below.  
Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved particulars and plans.