REF. NO. F/13/72555

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

DESCRIPTION/ ADDRESS	-	Conversion of first and second floors from 1No. three bedroom flat into 1No. one bed and 1no. two bed flat. 24A High Street, Eastleigh, SO50 5LD.

SITE VISIT DATE – 04/07/2013

ARE PLANS ACCURATE? - Yes

HAVE ALL NECESSARY NEIGHBOURS BEEN CONSULTED? - Yes

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	As above to convert the existing three bedroom flat which covers the first and second floors to a one bedroom on the first floor and a two bedroom on the second floor. Access will remain to the rear of the building where the existing parking and bin storage is accommodated.
SITE AREA	Approx 254 square metres.
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DENSITY (NET)	Approx 79 dwellings per hectare.
TOPOGRAPHY	Flat and level.
TREES	None.
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	The building sits directly onto High Street at the front with its flank walls forming the side boundaries. The rear boundaries are marked by a brick wall and removable bollards adjacent to the public walkway which runs alongside the site.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	Late Victorian three storey building with later single storey extension to the rear onto a service yard accessed via Wells Road to the rear. The ground floor is in commercial use with the upper floors used for a single residential unit.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	The site is within the heart of the town centre where there are a range of various commercial, community, leisure and residential uses.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
	Various applications for shop fronts and signage.	

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

SOURCE	SUMMARY OF CONTENT

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REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

SOURCE	SUMMARY OF CONTENT
None received.	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
Head of Transportation & Engineering	Following further discussions with the applicant with regards to parking provision, given that there is space available to the rear of the building should it be required, and that the site is within the town centre where it is close to various facilities including the train and bus station, it is agreed that no formal allocated parking for the two flats is acceptable. However, suitable secure cycle storage for each flat will be required, together with the usual transport contributions towards local projects.
Head of Environmental Heath	No objection provided suitable mitigation measures to protect future residents from disturbance caused by adjacent extraction units and air-conditioning equipment are undertaken. Condition recommended.

POLICY CONTEXT

DESIGNATION APPLICABLE TO SITE
Within Built-up Area Boundary Within Established Town Centre

DEVELOPMENT PLAN SAVED POLICIES, EMERGING LOCAL PLAN POLICIES AND SPD'S

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011): 28.ES, 59.BE, 101.T, 125.TC, 141.TC, 147.OS & 191.IN
Pre submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029: DM1, DM21, DM23, DM24, DM25, DM29, DM32, DM35, DM37 & E7
Supplementary Planning Document: Quality Places
Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Parking Standards
Supplementary Planning Document: Planning Obligations

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports and encourages sustainable development which is considered to have three roles, economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that "These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards, and well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system. The planning system should play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions."

Paragraph 23 states that "local planning authorities should: - recognise that residential development can play an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres, and set out policies to encourage residential development on appropriate sites".

POLICY COMMENTARY

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The above policies and guidance combine to form the criteria against which this application will be assessed with particular regard to the principle of that proposed, its layout and design, impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring uses and future occupiers, parking, the street scene and character of the area.

COMMENT ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Comments noted and responded to where appropriate below.

COMMENT ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

n/a

PLANNING OBLIGATION/CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the guidance contained within saved Policies 101.T, 147.OS and 191.IN of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011) and Supplementary Planning Document 'Planning Obligations', this application is subject to developer's contributions towards the provision of community infrastructure, off-site public open space and sustainable transport in the local area.

The applicant has agreed to provide the required contributions via an up-front payment which has now been secured.

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"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."

The proposal is considered to comply with relevant Development Plan policies.

In this case policy issues for consideration include:

Principle – The application site lies within the urban edge where the basic principle of development is considered to be acceptable, with any formal planning approval being based upon the exact nature, design and impact of that proposed being considered appropriate and in accordance with the relevant local plan policies and supplementary guidance. The most relevant policy in this case is saved Policy 59.BE of the Local Plan which requires development to take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character and appearance of the locality and be appropriate in mass, scale, materials, layout, design and siting. It also requires a high standard of landscape design, have a satisfactory means of access and layout for vehicles, cyclist and pedestrians, make provision for refuse and cycle storage and avoid unduly impacting on neighbouring uses through overlooking, loss of light, loss of outlook, and noise and fumes. Also of relevance is Policy DM1 of the Pre-submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 which essentially reiterates the above requirements.

Also of relevance are saved Policies 125.TC and 141.TC which relate to Eastleigh Town Centre and the use of upper floors in retail areas. Policy 125.TC encourages the town centre to

ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSAL

DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND/OR LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

be a mixed use area, providing a range of retail, commercial, leisure, community, office and residential uses so long as they are sited appropriately and does not reduce the retail frontage area available in the primary shopping zone. Policy 141.TC promotes the use of upper floors above retail units for use as office and residential, in order to make the most of the floor space available in the town centre and to improve its vitality and viability.

In principle therefore the proposed use of the upper floors above the existing retail unit for residential flats is in accordance with the relevant saved policies of the current local plan.

Layout & Design – Externally there will be little change to the building, other than the replacement of the original windows with more modern double glazed units, together with some external refurbishment. Presently the first and second floors are laid out as a single large three bedroom unit, with sitting room, dining room and kitchen on the first floor and three bedrooms and a bathroom on the second.

The proposal is to convert the first floor into a one bedroom flat with a living/dining/kitchen area at the front and bedroom to the rear, with the second floor being converted into a two bedroom flat with a similar layout. Both flats will be accessed via a shared enclosed staircase to the rear of the building from the existing rear service yard/parking area where bin and secure cycle storage is also to be provided. A condition to this effect is recommended.

Residential Amenity – The floors to be converted are already in residential use, therefore any impact upon neighbouring uses will be no worse than at present, although compared to other surrounding uses a residential use would result in very little disturbance.

The other amenity issue to consider is potential impact upon future occupiers of the flats, which has been raised as an issue by the Head of Environmental Health. The main concern is the presence of a number of air conditioning and extraction units on neighbouring buildings which could result in disturbance to occupiers and a condition requiring a noise report and details mitigation measures to be submitted prior to commencement has been requested.

While it is noted that there are a number of small air conditioning units close by, these are very small commercial units which do not generate significant amounts of noise. The site is also within the town centre where some disturbance is to be expected and the applicant has confirmed that they will be replacing the existing windows with modern double glazed units. It is therefore felt that to require a detailed and expensive noise report for such a small scale development, particularly when the upper floors of the building are already in residential use, would be excessive and unnecessary. The installation of double glazed units, which will be required by building regulations, will be sufficient to mitigate for the modest noise disturbance caused by nearby conditioning units. As such the requested condition is not recommended.

Parking – Following discussions with the applicant the Head of Transportation and Engineering is satisfied that in this instance there is no need for formally allocated parking specifically for the two flat units. In the past small residential units above shops in the town centre have been accepted without parking given the close proximity of the bus and train station, as well as the other facilities which the town centre has available. It is also acknowledged that residents of the flats may well not have cars. That being the case, together with there being some parking available to the rear which can be used either by residents or the ground floor commercial unit, it is felt that no formal parking is acceptable in this instance and that it can be a matter between the occupiers and the site landlord.

Street Scene & Area Character – In terms of the street scene there will be no significant change other than some external refurbishment of the building. With regards to the general character of the area, the introduction of further residential development within the town centre

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is welcomed and encouraged by the current saved policies of the local plan and by the proposed policies of the draft plan which has not yet been adopted. It is also something which is encouraged by the NPPF. However, this should not be at the expense of the viability or vitality of the town centre or the amenity of occupiers, neither of which are considered to be issues in this instance.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Also of relevance is the pre-submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029. While not yet adopted it does carry weight by virtue of being intended as the current local plan's replacement. With regards to this application, the new policies essentially echo those of the current plan and are not considered to affect the recommendation put forward.

CONCLUSIONS

Overall the application proposals are considered to be acceptable and to meet the requirements of the relevant adopted local plan policies, principally saved Policies 59.BE, 125.TC and 141.TC and the relevant supplementary planning documents. As such the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.