

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: X/25/100420

Site Address: BARCLAYS HOUSE, 20-24 UPPER MARKET STREET, EASTLEIGH, SO50 9FD

Case Officer: Gary Osmond

Description: Variation of the Condition 2 (Approved Drawings)- For the approved planning application F/24/97665- Installation of new windows and doors to side and rear elevations and mansard roof, and rooflight windows to rear flat roof.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☐	No ☐
- Existing employment site – Policy DM15 - Eastleigh Town Centre – Policy E3 - Urban edge - Some surface water flood risk rear of site - Commercial Centre character area - Airport safeguarding zone		

Planning History?	Yes ☐	No ☐
- F/24/97665 - Installation of new windows and doors to side and rear elevations and mansard roof – approved 12/08/2024 - PN/24/97939 – Application for Prior approval for change of use form offices/services (Class E) to 22 dwellings under Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order – approved 20/12/2024. - PN/21/90544 – Prior approval for change of use from offices to dwellinghouses floors 2 and 3 – withdrawn 05/07/2021 - PN/20/88413 – Prior approval for change of use of 2nd and 3rd floors from office to residential – refused 25/09/2020, due to lack of information to demonstrate acceptability in relation to transport and highway impacts and noise. - PN/20/88412 – Prior approval for change of use of 1st-3rd floors from office to residential – refused 25/09/2020, due to lack of information to demonstrate acceptability in relation to transport and highway impacts and noise. - Z/27118/000/00 – erection of four storey office building with bank on ground floor – permission 13/07/1984 - Z/27117/000/00 – erection of 3-storey building with car park under (22-24 Station Hill) – permission 13/07/1984 - Z/15098/003/00 – demolition of existing building and erection of a showroom with two floors of offices over and basement parking (22-24 Station Hill) – permission 10/06/1980 - Z/15098/001/00 – demolition of existing building and erection of 5-storey office building – withdrawn 09/05/1979 - Z/08433/00F/00 – renewal of permission for use of building as offices and warehouse – temporary approval 31/10/1974 There have also been various other applications for signage and alterations.		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	None received		
Eastleigh Town Council:	No Objection		

Site Visit:	Yes ☐	No ☒
Details: The site is very well known to the case officer		

Policy:

**National Planning Policy Framework
Planning Practice Guidance**

Development Plan:

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 The most relevant policies are DM1 (General development criteria), DM15 (Safeguarding existing employment sites) and E3 (Eastleigh Town Centre)..

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Quality Places.

Assessment:

Site Context:

The site lies to the north of the main retail part town centre in a block of predominantly office buildings, with the application site being a former bank and offices above, but which is now being converted into residential flats following prior approval consent being granted in 2024. Immediately to the north and south of the site are office buildings, with a hotel to the eastern rear. To the west on the opposite side of Upper Market Street is a supermarket with parking above, as well as the main town bus station and taxi rank.

Planning History & Proposals:

As set out above, prior approval consent was granted in 2024 for conversion of the former bank and offices to provide 22 one and two bedroom flats. A concurrent planning application for elevational alterations, was approved for the installation of additional windows within the side elevations and mansard roof in order to work with the proposed internal layout changes required for the residential conversion.

This S73 application seeks consent for the installation of a number of small additional windows to the northern elevation at first floor level, together with a small window in the southern slope of the mansard roof. Additionally, consent is sought for the erection of a 1.6 metre high boundary fence around the site frontage to create private amenity spaces for the front ground floor flats.

Policy & Principle:

The application site lies within the urban edge where the basic principle of development is acceptable. However, any formal planning approval will be dependent upon how well that proposed is considered to accord with the relevant policies within the adopted Local Plan, as well as relevant supplementary planning documents. In this instance the relevant policies are considered to be Policies DM1 and E3.

Policy DM1 requires new development to be of a suitable design standard and to take appropriate account of the site's context and that of the surrounding area. Additionally, it requires development to ensure impact upon the amenity of neighbouring uses and occupiers is protected and/or appropriately mitigated, as well as ensuring good quality amenity for future occupiers of the development.

Policy E3 relates to Eastleigh town centre which states that regeneration of the town centre will be supported through: strengthening the retail circuit through the functions of the town centre and appropriate mixed use development; promoting well designed development; and where changes of use within the core retail area comply with Policy DM22.

In principle therefore that proposed is acceptable. However, there are concerns with the detail of that proposed.

Layout & Design:

The proposed installation of the additional windows within the northern elevation of the building is considered to be acceptable and will have no real material impact upon the original building or upon the street scene due to their location towards the rear of the building. Equally, the additional window within the southern slope of the mansard roof, whilst visible from the street, will have no adverse impact due to its small size, its position on the top floor and when viewed against the scale of the building's flank elevation. These elements of the application are considered to accord with the requirements of Policy DM1 and the Council's 'Quality Places' SPD.

The second part of the application to create a pair of private amenity areas for the front ground floor flats by utilising the original paved frontage is in principle acceptable. However, there are concerns as to the visual impact this will have upon the street scene, certainly in the manner currently proposed (see below).

Amenity:

The installation of the additional windows will have no impact upon the amenity of any neighbouring uses due to the position of the windows, their orientation and the nature of those neighbouring occupiers. However, the additional windows will significantly improve natural light into the relevant flats, thereby improving the quality of environment internally.

With regards to the creation of private amenity spaces to the site frontage by the erection of a 1.6 metre high boundary fence, it is accepted that this would not only provide an external space for the flat residents to use, but it would also provide a greater degree of privacy for those ground floor units, which are currently open to the street. However, a balance must be struck between providing suitable privacy, verses, being sympathetic to the street scene and character of the immediate locality.

Street Scene & Area Character:

The application building is set back 4.8 metres from the back edge of the pavement and consists of paving with two low level brick planters. Whilst these planters do delineate the boundary between public and private to some extent, it will still be possible to walk right up to the front windows of the building, which understandably could raise possible privacy and security issues for the new occupiers.

In principle, the erection/construction of new/additional boundary treatment is acceptable. However, as stated above, this must be undertaken in a form which not only provides the desired additional privacy and security but also respects the street scene and character of the locality, which based on the information provided and form proposed, is not considered to be the case in this instance.

The pavement in front of the site is very busy, being a main pedestrian route into the town centre. The site is also directly opposite the main bus station and taxi rank, meaning that it is highly visible. As such, any significant alterations to the site frontage will impact upon the street scene and visual amenity of the locality.

The submitted drawings indicate some form of 1.6 metre high 'enclosure' which would incorporate the existing brick planters. However, no indication of the nature of the enclosure has been provide, i.e. is it to be brick, metal or timber, despite further information being requested from the applicant? Neither has any indication of the finish or colour been provided. Based on the basic drawings provided and the thickness of the enclosure, it appears that it would certainly not be brick. Without this basic information it cannot be determined how that proposed would impact the visual amenity of the site, the impact upon the street scene, or upon the character of the locality.

Notwithstanding the lack of information as to the nature and appearance of the proposed boundary treatment, there are concerns that the erection of a 1.6 metre high structure along the back edge of the pavement would appear incongruous in comparison to the generally open nature of neighbouring site frontages. Where sites do have some form of

boundary treatment, these are generally metre high brick walls. A similar boundary treatment, potentially in addition to enlarged planting beds in front of a slightly higher boundary treatment would provide an appropriate level of privacy and security for the ground floor occupiers, whilst being far more respectful to the street scene. However, that is not what has been proposed, and it is for the reasons set out above that the application is to be recommended for refusal.

Other Matters:

With regards to other matters such as highways, parking, ecology, etc. it is not considered that proposed would have any adverse or unacceptable impact.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications

Conclusion:

Recommendation:	PERMIT ☐	REFUSE ☒
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For the reasons set out above, the application is recommended for refusal.

The proposed erection of an unspecified 1.6 metre boundary treatment along the site frontage would result in an incongruous feature out of keeping with the character and nature of the locality, to the detriment of the street scene and visual amenity of the area. As such, the application is considered to be contrary to Policies DM1 and E3 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) and the Supplementary Planning Document 'Quality Places'.