

Planning Application: 20/00785/FUL

Proposal: Conversion of Building used for storage and distribution (class BA) to 8 No 1 bedroom Cottages (Class C3)

Application Site: 3 Coggeshall Road, Braintree Essex CM7 9DB

This application seeks to provide eight one-bedroom cottages in Braintree Town Centre.

In the officer's report, only two areas of potential conflict are identified (1) amenity of future occupiers and (2) parking. The planning officer's views on these 2 issues are subjective assessments and matters of judgement. In all other respects the proposed development is considered to be acceptable.

Amenity for Future Occupiers

The main living accommodation is on the first floor with a large window to the front and a roof light to the rear. It is however suggested that this gives is a poor level of natural light. Actually roof lights provide more light than a rear window would because the rooflight is positioned on the slope of the vaulted roof where light is directed to the rear and central areas of the room. The light provided also exceeds building control standards. With regards to light the sun soon rises from the east and shines across the site whilst it orientates through the south and to the west where it will shine through the roof lights.

A further criticism is that the bedrooms in all of the cottages will only have a single aspect. This is in fact the norm for the majority of our homes.

As to the outlook the red brick perimeter wall is considered an original attractive feature with a few trees beyond offering some greenery and screening to our neighbours in the converted and characteristic Tabor building. In the previous appeal decision, the inspector was satisfied with the amount of local amenity before the addition of the front gardens. We would be happy to work with officers to agree the correct treatment of boundaries of the cottages as deemed appropriate, including the screening and noise reduction of parking bay 4.

Parking

The sizes of the parking spaces are criticised however the plan scaling should show they are all 2.6mx5.5m. The parking standards 2009 indicate a preferred size of 2.9mx5.5m. However, the standard referred to indicates a preference and not a strict requirement. There is no objection from Highways.

Officers criticise the 50% parking provided and relevant polices state that sufficient parking should be provided to all new developments. However, the restriction can be reduced in town centre developments which this clearly is. This is accepted in the officer's report. In four recent application officers agreed that zero parking for 3no dwellings at the Golden Lion, and two undersized park spaces at 101 both of Manor Street and zero parking for 2no flats at 5 Rayne Road or 4no flats at the Nags Head was acceptable.

As suggested cars could not park on the nearby highway, this simply could not happen due to highway restrictions in the town centre. If further parking is required, the town carparks are all within walking distance.

Conclusion

This Application seeks to re-use a disused building and assist with the regeneration of the town centre. These are two issues that I am passionate about. There is a large amount of local support for the proposed development which is demonstrated by the letters of support.

If granted the application site would contribute towards the council housing shortfall. The council in other cases consistently supports lower car parking and amenity space standards in the town centre where there is good access to those facilities.

The two issues raised by the officer do not amount to significant or demonstrable harm. At a time when the provision of housing and the rejuvenation of the town centre are much needed, this Application should be granted without hesitation.



Ground floor natural light



First floor natural light



View of sunshine on building



Sun position at 10am 9th October 2020



Outlook from property



1.8m high feature red brick wall creating the boundary



Parking arrangement



Coggeshall Road double yellow lines



Sainsburys Car park less than 1 minute walk away and free parking after 6pm