

24 South Street Epsom Surrey KT18 7PF

Ward:	Town Ward
Site:	24 South Street Epsom Surrey KT18 7PF
Application for:	Conversion of the 3 storey office building into 2 one-bedroom dwellings on the first and second floor and commercial unit on the ground floor
Contact Officer:	John Robinson

1 Plans and Representations

- 1.1 The Council now holds this information electronically. Please click on the following link to access the plans and representations relating to this application via the Council's website, which is provided by way of background information to the report. Please note that the link is current at the time of publication, and will not be updated.

Link: <https://eplanning.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=QMVG3EGYJNO00>

2 Summary

- 2.1 This application is referred to Committee, as the property is owned by the Council.
- 2.2 The application seeks permission for the conversion of the 3 storey office building into 2 one-bedroom dwellings on the first and second floor and commercial unit on the ground floor
- 2.3 The scheme would comply with local policy requirements and no planning objections are raised.
- 2.4 **The application is recommended for APPROVAL.**

3 Site description

- 3.1 The application property comprises a circa 19th century period, 3-storey end of block, building, with white painted, rendered elevations, under a hipped roof. There is an existing shop front at ground floor level, and the upper floors have a separate entrance from street level.

- 3.2 The property located on the west side of South Street. It is currently vacant and has been unused for a number of years. It was previously used as a “drop in” youth centre and offices for the Surrey County Council.
- 3.3 The neighbouring property at Nos 26/28 South Street, listed in 1954, has a double bowed shopfront with a central door of 19th Century origins, and the building as a whole is of seventeen/eighteenth century origins. The neighbouring property to the north of 24A South Street is similar in appearance and character with the exception of the shopfront.
- 3.4 The property is not listed, but falls within the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area, within a Primary Shopping Area and a Secondary Retail Frontage.

4 Proposal

- 4.1 The application seeks permission for the conversion of the 3 storey office building into 2 one-bedroom dwellings on the first and second floor. The shop unit on the ground floor would be retained.
- 4.2 The housing and support services charity Transform Housing will be acquiring them to use for homeless individuals as part of Homes England’s Move On Fund initiative to get the homeless back into society. The units would not be let on the open market.
- 4.3 No external alterations to the building are proposed, apart from the enlargement of a first floor rear window.

5 Comments from third parties

- 5.1 The application was advertised by means of a site and press notice, and letters of notification to 10 neighbouring properties. At the close of the consultation period 22.02.2021, no letters of objection had been received

6 Consultations

- 6.1 EEBC Design and Conservation Officer: No objection
- 6.2 SCC Highways: No objection, subject to conditions.
- 6.3 EEBC Waste Services Manager: No Objections

7 Relevant planning history

Application number	Decision date	Application detail	Decision
17/00387/FUL	22.01.2018	Change of use of offices at first and second floors to create 2 new residential units (amended description).	GRANTED

8 Planning Policy

National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) 2019

Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Core Strategy 2007

Policy CS15 Role of Local Centres

Policy CS16 Highways and Transport

Policy CS5 Conserving and Enhancing the Quality of the Built Environment

Development Management Policies Document 2015

Policy DM8 Heritage Assets

Policy DM9 Townscape Character and Local Distinctiveness

Policy DM10 Design Requirements for New Developments (including House Extensions)

Policy DM12 Housing Standards

Policy DM37 Parking Standards

Plan E Epsom Town Centre AAP Policy E4

9 Planning considerations

Principle of Development

Impact on Heritage Assets

10 Principle of Development

- 10.1 Policy CS15 sets out that measures to protect the role, functions and needs of the local centres will be encouraged. The Local Planning Authority will resist proposals, which are likely to damage, undermine the retail function of these centres, or detract from their vitality and viability.
- 10.2 Policy E4 sets out that within Secondary Retail Frontages as defined on the Proposals Map, new A1 A2 and A3 uses will be permitted. A5 uses will not be permitted. Other uses will be permitted provided they demonstrate that they:
- Will not harm the predominantly retail character and appearance of the frontage
 - Contribute to the vitality and viability of that part of the Town Centre
 - Will not result in an over concentration of such uses, so as to create a significant break in the retail frontage
 - Will not result in an increase in anti-social behaviour
 - Are compatible with the neighbouring uses.
- 10.3 Paragraph 11d of the National Planning Policy framework is engaged via footnote 7 in circumstances where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply. The practical application and consequence of this is that unless the site is located in an area or involves an asset of particular importance that provides a clear reason for refusal, then permission must be granted unless it can be demonstrated that any adverse impacts demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.
- 10.4 The application proposes two residential units, therefore helping to contribute to these annual housing targets and the retail unit would be retained which would contribute to the viability and vitality of this part of the town centre.
- 10.5 Planning permission for the change of use of offices at first and second floors to create 2 new residential units was granted in 2018, but was not implemented. The permission has subsequently expired.
- 10.6 The principle of the change of use and creating additional residential units is therefore acceptable, subject to the below considerations.

11. Impact on Heritage Assets

- 11.1 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF (2019) states [inter alia] that Local Planning Authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 9.2 Paragraph 193 of the NPPF (2019) states that when considering the impact of the proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 9.3 Paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2019) states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:
- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
 - b) assets of the highest significance, notable scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II registered parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.
- 9.4 Policy DM8 (Heritage Assets) of the Council's Development Management Policies Document (2015) states [inter alia] that development proposals that involve, or have an effect upon heritage assets must establish the significance of the asset as part of the application or consent process.
- 9.5 The listing description of the abutting building at Nos26/28 South Street is as follows:
- Late C17 .early C18 house, early C19 shop front. Three storeys, plum brick with some black headers. 5 sash windows the central blocked, and also the two outer ones on 2nd floor. Moulded eaves, old hipped slate roof. Built on in front on the ground floor is an excellent wide double bowed shopfront with central door and panelled pilasters. Shallow frieze and continuous straight hood over. Interior. Staircase, contemporary, but lower flight with balusters of early C18 character (balustrade boarded in).*
- 9.6 The proposal would result in minimal changes to the external elevations of the application property, save for an enlarged rear window. The proposal would therefore lead to less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building and to the character and appearance of the wider conservation area.

- 9.7 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy DM8

12 Visual Impact

- 9.8 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF sets out that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 9.9 Policies DM9 and DM10 encourage high quality development and planning permission will be granted for proposals, which make a positive contribution to the borough's visual character and appearance. Policy DM8 states that the Council will resist the loss of our Heritage Assets and every opportunity to conserve and enhance them should be taken by new development.
- 9.10 There are no alterations proposed to the front elevation and the enlarged, first floor window at the rear of the building would not be visible in the streetscene. In addition, it is considered that bringing an empty building back into use would enhance the character and appearance of the Epsom Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 9.11 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy DM9 and DM10.

10 Neighbouring Amenity

- 10.1 Policy DM10 sets out those development proposals should (inter alia) have regard to the amenities of occupants and neighbours, including in terms of privacy, outlook, sunlight/daylight, and noise and disturbance.
- 10.2 There are no residential buildings in proximity to the proposed scheme and the rear windows would serve a kitchen and bathroom, respectively. The proposed scheme would therefore not lead to an unacceptable increase and overlooking or lead to a loss of privacy.
- 10.3 The proposal would comply with Policy DM10.

11 Quality of Accommodation

- 11.1 The Nationally Described Space Standards, introduced by DCLG in March 2015 states that for a one-bedroom, one storey, one-person unit the minimum Gross Internal Area (GIA) is between 37 and 39m² (the GIA may be reduced to 37m² when a shower room is proposed rather than a bathroom) and a one-bedroom two person unit 50m².

- 11.2 It further states that in order to provide one bedspace, a single bedroom has a floor area of at least 7.5m² and to provide two bed spaces, a double (or twin bedroom) has a floor area of at least 11.5m². The minimum floor to ceiling height requirement is 2.3 metres for at least 75% of the GIA and any headroom of less than 1.5 metres is not counted within the GIA unless used solely for storage.
- 11.3 The proposed one-bedroom (1 person) flats would have a GIA of 44m² which would comply with the Described Space Standard's requirement of 39m² for one-bedroom (1 person) units.
- 11.4 In respect of occupant amenity, namely in regards to potential noise nuisance arising from the ground floor commercial unit, officers have weighed this existing use which is presently under planning Use Class A1 that is now categorised under planning Use Class E. Officer note, that the ground floor use can now be varied in operational activity to a number of trading/use-types, therefore, in order to safeguard occupant amenity from noise nuisance, officer propose to place a pre-commencement condition to safeguard/mitigate these growing concerns in order to comply with policy DM10.

Private Amenity Space

- 11.5 Paragraph 3.36 of the Council's Development Management Policies Document (2015) states that to provide adequate private amenity space for the development of flats, a minimum of 5m² of private amenity space for 1-2 person dwellings should be provided plus an extra 1sqm for each additional occupant.
- 11.6 Due to the building and site constraints, the proposal would not provide any private amenity space or communal space. As the flats would not be occupied by families, and given the town centre location, and the proximity of Roseberry Park, the lack of amenity space is acceptable. Permission for flat developments in the town centre, without the provision of amenity space were recently granted under reference 19/01317/FUL and 20/00203/FUL.
- 11.7 The lack of amenity space is given minor negative weight in the planning balance.

12 Highways and Car Parking

- 12.1 Policy DM37 (Parking Standards) of the Council's Development Management Policies Document (2015) seeks to ensure that new schemes provide an appropriate level of off-street parking to avoid an unacceptable impact on on-street parking conditions and local traffic conditions.

- 12.2 The Council's adopted Parking Standards SPD requires the provision of a minimum of 1.5 (2 spaces) for the proposed scheme.
- 12.3 Due to building and site constraints, no on-site parking spaces would be provided.
- 12.4 The application site is in a sustainable location, accessible by non-car modes of transport in an area with extensive on-street parking restrictions, and therefore there is not considered any impact on highway safety in terms of parking and/or capacity grounds.
- 12.5 Permission for flat developments in the town centre, without the provision of on-site parking spaces were recently granted under reference 19/01317/FUL and 20/00203/FUL.
- 12.6 The Highways Officer has raised no objection, subject to a condition requiring the on-site facilities for the secure parking of bicycles within the development site to be provided in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 12.7 The lack of on-site parking is assigned minor negative weight in the planning balance.

Servicing Arrangements

- 12.8 The Council's Waste Services Manager commented as follows:

After further discussion internally and a site visit I can advise that the existing building has no provision for bins. Collections when the building was previously occupied, were made by sacks.

Therefore, if there is no bin storage proposed within this application, I am happy to continue the sack-based collection service. All new tenants will need to be advised of this limited collection service:

Collections will be for refuse and mixed recycling (in separate sacks) only.

On collection days, sacks must be left out for collection on the pavement in front of the building from 6.30am.

Sacks must not be left on the pavement in between collections.

For domestic occupants collections will take place once a week.

For trade occupants, collections frequency will be negotiable, with the cost reflecting the frequency as per the Council's prevailing fees and charges.

- 12.9 Officers are in agreement with the Waste Services Manager, and an appropriate informative will be added to any permission granted.

13 Community Infrastructure Levy

13.1 The scheme would not be liable for CIL.

14 Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 14.1 Paragraph 11d of the National Planning Policy framework is engaged via footnote 7 in circumstances where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply. The practical application and consequence of this is that unless the site is located in an area or involves an asset of particular importance that provides a clear reason for refusal, then permission must be granted unless it can be demonstrated that any adverse impacts demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF as a whole.
- 14.2 Para 196 of the NPPF states: Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 14.3 The proposal would result in the provision of two additional dwelling units. Whilst not significant, they would nevertheless help to address the Council's housing shortfall and therefore weighs positively in the planning balance.
- 14.4 The proposed scheme would bring back into use a previously vacant building, which would have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area, and on the vitality of the high street.
- 14.5 The lack of amenity space and on-site parking are assigned minor negative weight in the planning balance.
- 14.6 The LPA have applied the presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined in para 11d of the NPPF. The benefits of the proposal have been identified and weighed. When assessing the any adverse impacts from this proposal they are not considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Policies of the framework as required by Para 11 of the NPPF. As such, the proposal is considered an acceptable form of sustainable development and is recommended for Approval subject to imposition of conditions.

15 Recommendation

15.1 Planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

Condition(s):

- (1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- (2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

24SSRP002/2 Proposed plans
24SSRP002/4 Proposed elevations
24SSRP002/6 Proposed elevations and roof plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans to comply with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007).

- (3) The development hereby permitted shall be constructed entirely of the materials as detailed on the schedule of materials on the planning application form.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of the visual amenities and character of the locality in accordance with Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy (2007) and Policies DM8, DM9 and DM10 of the Development Management Policies 2015.

- (4) The development hereby approved shall not be first occupied unless and until the facilities for the secure parking of bicycles within the development site have been provided in accordance with the approved plans and thereafter shall be provided, retained and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: The above condition is required in recognition of Section 9 "Promoting Sustainable Transport" in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy DM37 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015.

- (5) Soundproofing shall be provided to ensure that the flats for residential purposes sharing a party element with the ground floor premises to which this planning permission relates shall receive a minimum airborne sound insulation on the party element which achieves DnT'w of 60 dB before the first use of the development hereby approved. The soundproofing shall be retained thereafter in perpetuity.

REASON: To ensure that the occupiers of the flat units do not suffer a loss of amenity by reason of noise nuisance and other excess noise from activities within the premises in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies Document 2015.

Informative(s):

- (1) In dealing with the application the Council has implemented the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive way. We have made available detailed advice in the form of our statutory policies in the Core Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Briefs and other informal written guidance, as well as offering a full pre-application advice service, in order to ensure that the applicant has been given every opportunity to submit an application which is likely to be considered favourably.
- (2) The applicant is advised of the following with regard to waste servicing:
- All new tenants will need to be advised of the limited waste collection service:
 - Collections will be for refuse and mixed recycling (in separate sacks) only.
 - On collection days, sacks must be left out for collection on the pavement in front of the building from 6.30am.
 - Sacks must not be left on the pavement in between collections.
 - For domestic occupants collections will take place once a week.
 - For trade occupants, collections frequency will be negotiable, with the cost reflecting the frequency as per the Council's prevailing fees and charges.