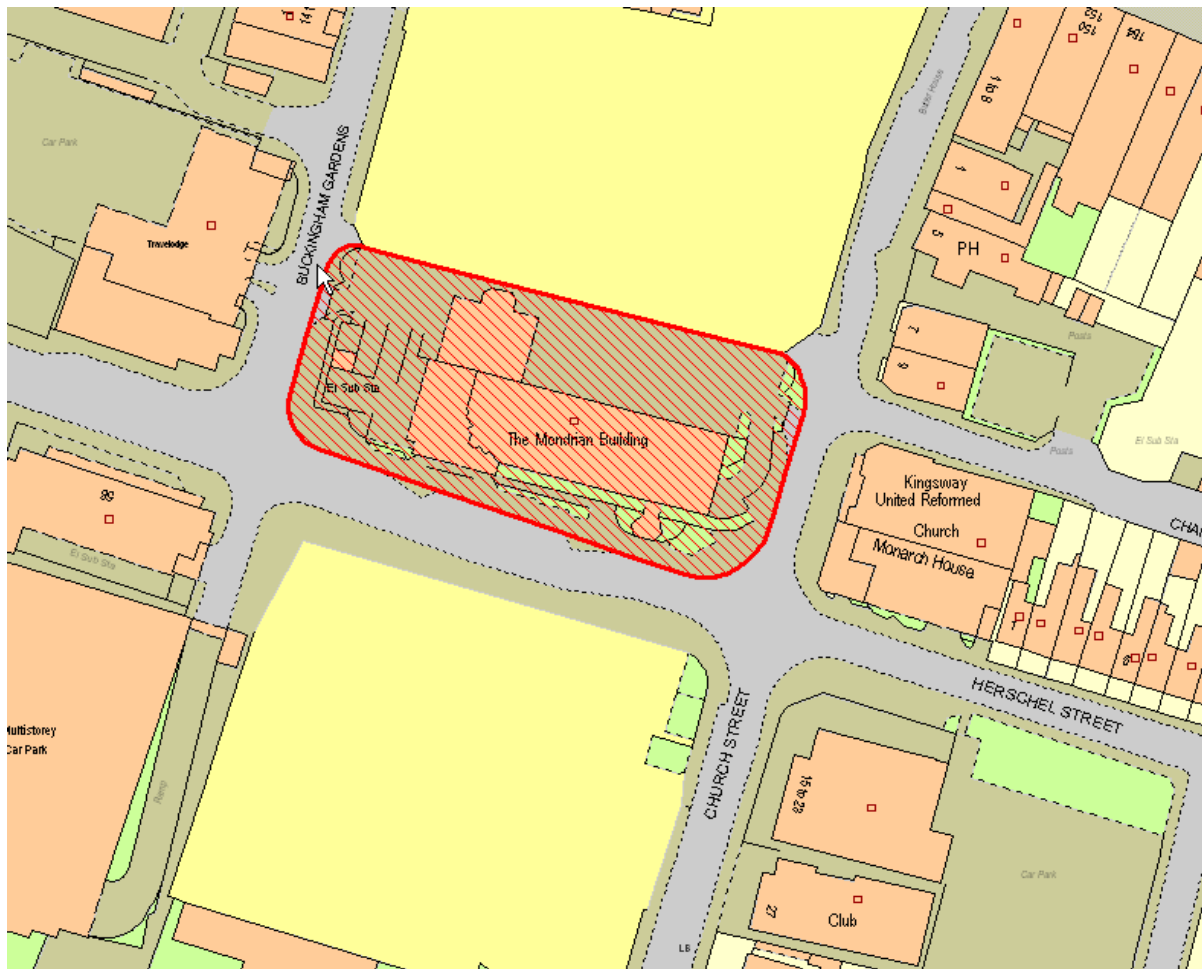


Registration Date:	16-Jan-2014	Applic. No:	P/04303/040
Officer:	Mr. Albertini	Ward:	Upton
		Applic type:	Major
		13 week date:	17 th April 2014
Applicant:	Mr. Aaron Emmett, Timeless Property Services Ltd		
Location:	Nova Building, Herschel Street, Slough, SL1 1XS		
Proposal:	CONVERSION & EXTENSION OF EXISTING OFFICE BUILDING FOR 68 FLATS INCLUDING 2 ADDITIONAL FLOORS, ALTERATION OF PARKING AREA & ACCESS.		

Recommendation: Delegate to Strategic Lead Planning Policy



1.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION

Delegate to Strategic Lead Planning Policy

2.0 PART A: BACKGROUND Proposal

- 2.1 The extension comprises the addition of 2 floors on top plus a small seventh floor at the west end. It will be 6 metres higher than the ridge line of the existing building and approximately 11.5 metres higher than the eaves of the existing building. It also includes infilling part of the ground floor entrance area at the west end of the building.
- 2.2 The accommodation comprises 68no. flats consisting of 15 one bedroom, 47 two bedroom and 6 three bedroom flats. No affordable housing is referred to in the planning application but the applicant is in discussion with the Council's Housing Section.
- 2.3 The pedestrian entrance from Herschel Street will remain but reformed as part of the ground floor infill.
- 2.4 The main vehicular access will be formed by widening the existing Buckingham Gardens access. This will provide access to the existing basement. The Church Street access will remain to serve surface parking and boiler house on the north side of the site. The existing link through the site, for cars, just below ground floor level, will be severed by the ground floor infill. The existing east access to and exit from the basement will be closed off. 2 disabled parking spaces are shown on the raised area next to the ground floor entrance at the west end accessed by a car ramp up from the Buckingham Gardens entrance area.
- 2.5 The existing building will be re-clad but the roof and north elevation escape stair will be removed. Balconies will be added such that most flats will have one.
- 2.6 The extension and re-cladding will comprise bands of zinc or anodised metal with perforated balconies. These bands will be separated by bands of windows and render infill panels. The top floor, the small seventh storey and south elevation escape stair will be vertical panels of zinc or anodised metal in a different colour to the rest of the building. There is also a reference to brick cladding which is to be clarified.
- 2.7 Indicative colours are grey for the top floors, bronze or similar for the bands plus some blue on a projecting bay. The existing street level brick plinth remains.
- 2.8 49 parking spaces are proposed of which 37 are in the basement together with cycle parking. Refuse is shown in a room next to the entrance with a holding area for bins at a lower level for collection day. A transport statement has been submitted.
- 2.9 Revised drawings are expected to address highway, transport and design issues at ground floor/basement level.

3.0 Application Site

- 3.1 This 2.356 ha. site has on it a vacant 4 storey office with a large pitched and hipped roof with overhanging eaves. It was built about 1990 and is raised above Herschel Street on a brick plinth with access at both ends of the site on Buckingham Gardens and Church Street. The floorspace is 2,878 sqm gross internal and it has some basement and some ground level parking.
- 3.2 The site is close to the High Street. To the west of the site is Travelodge, a 9/10 storey hotel, to the north is a vacant redevelopment site, to the east a Church and small office building, to the south on the opposite side of Herschel St is a site, known as the Aspire site, that has planning permission for offices with buildings a bit taller than the proposal.
- 3.3 Regarding the redevelopment site to the north (previously known as Buckingham Gateway) an application to extend the time limit of the planning permission has been received. That permission included hotel, shops and offices. The latter might be replaced by residential in a future application. The permitted scheme included a service road abutting the Nova Building site and 8 storey building beyond.
- 3.4 St. Mary's Church, a listed building, is visible to the south. The proposal will not affect the setting of this building. Planning permission for the Aspire site to the south includes buildings higher than Nova Building.

4.0 Site History

- 4.1 Prior Approval application for change of use to residential (44 flats). No approval needed so change of use is permitted development. F/4303/039 3/10/13.

Office development (3300 sqm gross external) with 110 spaces. Approved May 1988 P/4303/12.

5.0 Neighbour Notification

- 5.1 Buckingham Gardens 1-12, 14-25 incl
Herschel St. Travelodge, 58, Monarch Ho.
Church St. 15 – 23 odd, Kingsway United Reformed Church, 1 – 9 odd.
High St. 112 – 130

Local Newspaper

- 5.2 No observations received.

6.0 Consultation

- 6.1 Traffic /Highways
Request revision to access, more details of swept path of vehicles, disabled person spaces revision (insufficient space for manoeuvring), clarification re accommodation of cycle storage, confirmation that refuse arrangements are practical (re manoeuvring bins on ramp). .

- 6.2 Housing Section
Request financial contribution to affordable housing off the site. This can be waived if the development includes 30% of the net increase in homes above 44 dwellings (permitted development) as social rent. The Housing Section are discussing the possibility of affordable housing on site with applicant.

PART B: PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.0 Policy Background

- 7.1 The site is within the town centre area as defined on the Local Plan Proposals Map. Regarding land use the Local Development Framework Core Policy 5 (Employment) states 'change of use or redevelopment of existing offices to residential will be encouraged where this is considered appropriate.'
- 7.2 Whilst the loss of relatively modern office accommodation in a central location is regrettable the prospect of it being reused for that use is unlikely in the near future. As the location and immediate surroundings are reasonable for flatted residential accommodation the principle of the loss of the office to residential use is acceptable.

8.0 Access and Design Matters

- 8.1 The infilling at ground floor raises no design issues. However it does cut of the through vehicle route which affects the way access arrangements work. This is referred to below. The additional 6 metre height of the building is modest in relation to its exist height but the overall mass is increased because the large pitched roof is lost and the eaves height rises. However because of the height of the Travelodge adjacent and permitted buildings to north and south the extra height will not have a significant adverse effect on the surroundings.
- 8.2 There are no residential properties immediately adjacent. Overlooking from neighbouring or future commercial development will occur but the separation distances are typical for a town centre location.
- 8.3 There is very limited amenity or planting space available for the flats. As most flats will have a balcony this is considered acceptable for a town centre location and conversion project. The raised ground floor above street level and set back from the footway helps residential amenity by keeping habitable rooms away from the street.
- 8.4 The materials proposed whilst not typical for a residential block are suitable for this town centre location with commercial developments nearby.
- 8.5 Access for the existing building relies upon entry at both ends of the site and circulation through the site to allow safe access to the basement and safe exit from the site. The proposed severing of the through route and blocking the east basement access means the west entrance (Buckingham Gardens) needs to be widened to take entry and exit traffic. In addition the west basement access ramp is single track so a traffic light system is needed. This will result in waiting cars at the top being very close to Buckingham Gardens entry point. This is not ideal as two cars waiting might mean the second car blocks the footway crossing.

- 8.6 The 49 parking spaces will mean not all homes will have access to a parking space. This is acceptable for a town centre location provided there is adequate cycle storage. Stores are in the basement in bays that can be locked. By condition appropriate stands can be agreed. Clarification is sought on the number of cycles that can be accommodated.
- 8.7 Refuse storage arrangements need to be clarified before a decision is made. Information is expected prior to the Committee meeting to address safety issues of moving containers on a ramp. The refuse store may move to the east side but safe refuse truck access may be a problem.
- 8.8 Revised drawings and further information has been requested to deal with outstanding refuse and highway/access matters. These are expected prior to the Planning Committee meeting.

9.0 Section 106 Planning Obligation Matters

- 9.1 With regard to Section 106 planning obligation requirements these are applied to 24 of the 68 units proposed as the applicant can convert the existing building to residential use (44 units) under permitted development rights.
- 9.2 Financial contributions to education and affordable housing off site are sought in line with Developers Guide under Core Strategy policy 4 and 10. The affordable housing contribution can be waived if a suitable package of on site affordable housing (social rent) is agreed for about 7 homes (30 % of the 24 units net increase).
- 9.3 The applicant has been asked to agree the principle of contributing financial sums.

PART C: RECOMMENDATION

10.0 Recommendation

- 10.1 Delegate a decision to the Strategic Lead Planning Policy :
- for the signing of a satisfactory Section 106 Agreement
 - to agree revised drawings requested
 - to amend or add to the draft conditions regarding the requested drawings.
 - to agree any minor amendments to the planning application, draft conditions and Section 106 planning obligation matters.

PART D: LIST OF CONDITIONS