

**ST ANDREWS COURT, WELLINGTON STREET**

External alterations to existing office buildings including to existing windows, incorporation of new terraced and inset roof balconies, roof lights, replacement of car parking spaces with external amenity area and new and additional cycle parking for occupiers and visitors.

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**1. Officer Recommendation:**

## SUPPORTS

- Subject to no objection from Highways.
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**2. Key Issues:**

- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

The building is currently in use as an office, with a dental practice at first floor level. It is proposed to retain the existing uses but improve the building's appearance and internal environment through the introduction of new windows and partial / significant changes to the existing windows. The applicant states the offices would be made more attractive to the market.

The southern ground floor corners are currently angled and would be squared-off to match the upper floors. The windows on the south elevation would be reduced in number with dark grey metal panels introduced where required to fill the "gaps". The ground floor, east elevation windows would be increased in depth and the current single doors changed to double, French doors.

Balconies would be introduced at first floor level, looking towards the snooker hall on the west frontage, with full-height doors and also southwards across the building's main car parking area. These would replace existing tiled canopies. The recessed roof dormers on the west and south frontages would be converted into full-height glazed doors and windows with external balconies formed. On the south-west corner a new balcony would be introduced into the roof. The balconies would all have obscure glazing to the front. Extra rooflights would also be introduced on the east, west and south roof slopes.

At ground floor level on the west elevation five car parking spaces would be removed and replaced with two small amenity areas. One car parking space would be placed back in front of each amenity space.

While the balcony on the south-west elevation would overlook parts of the nearest residential garden, that of 26 High Street, much of the garden would remain hidden from view, particularly that nearest the house. The impact on neighbouring amenity is not considered sufficient to warrant concern.

- **Parking and Access**

It is proposed that access will remain unchanged, and that 50 parking spaces would remain. The plans show that a secure bicycle store would be made available and new Sheffield-type stands would be introduced for visitors. Some 31 bicycle parking spaces are indicated within the application; it is not clear if the number and split between occupier / visitor spaces for either car or bicycle parking is appropriate as the property would be within open Class E use.

- **Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area**

There would be minimal impact on the character and appearance of the area. No change appears to have been proposed for the north elevation to Wellington Street.

- **Design**

The design is considered appropriate, given the immediate environment and it is not felt that the changes would risk harm to the setting of the Thame Conservation Area and nearby heritage assets.

- **Employment**

There would be a small gain in employment floorspace as a result of this application, but it would be limited to that made as a result of squaring-off the ground floor corners. The applicant has stated they do not believe that the numbers of jobs the site could yield would increase through these small changes.

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### **3. Planning History:**

[P21/S0957/N1A](#) – Change of use of the existing Class B1(a) (office) floorspace to 22 Class C3 (residential) self-contained flats. (amplified by further information received on 16th, 20th and 21st April 2021)

*TTC noted importance of, and potential impacts on, Thame Snooker Club*

*SODC agreed PD on 5 May 2021 – non-material amendment approved 12 December 2023*

[P21/S3022/N1A](#) – Change of use of the existing Class B1(a) (office) floorspace to 18 Class C3 (residential) self-contained flats. (Amended on 10 August 2021 and 23 August 2021)

*TTC – no comments*

*SODC agreed PD on 23 August 2021 – non-material amendment approved 28 March 2022*

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### **4. Risk Appraisal**

Dependent on the Town Council's recommendation to SODC is it likely that there would be a contrary decision by SODC? If so then a councillor should be nominated at the meeting to represent the views of the Town Council at the planning committee.

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### **5. Policies Relevant to the Application**

The following policies are of particular relevance when considering this application.

## **Thame Neighbourhood Plan**

H6	Design new development to be of high quality
GA6	New development to provide parking on site for occupants and visitors
ESDQ15	Developers must demonstrate in a Design and Access Statement how their proposed development reinforces Thame's character
ESDQ16	Development must relate well to its site and its surroundings
ESDQ17	Development must make a positive contribution towards the distinctive character of the town as a whole
ESDQ18	New development must contribute to local character by creating a sense of place appropriate to its location
ESDQ19	The Design and Access Statement and accompanying drawings must provide sufficient detail for proposals to be properly understood
ESDQ20	Building style must be appropriate to the historic context
ESDQ27	Design in the 'forgotten' elements from the start of the design process
ESDQ28	Provide good quality private outdoor space
ESDQ29	Design car parking so that it fits in with the character of the proposed development

## **SODC Local Plan 2035 Policies**

DES1	Delivering high quality development
DES2	Enhancing local character
DES3	Design and access statements
DES5	Outdoor amenity space
DES6	Residential amenity
DES7	Efficient use of resources
DES8	Promoting sustainable design
EMP3	Retention of employment land
EMP6	New employment land at Thame
ENV6	Historic environment
ENV7	Listed buildings
ENV8	Conservation areas
ENV12	Pollution – impact of development on human health, the non-strategic natural environment and/or local amenity (potential sources of pollution)
EP3	Waste collection and recycling
H3	Housing in the towns of Henley-on-Thames, Thame, and Wallingford
H9	Affordable housing
H11	Housing mix
H16	Backland and infill development and redevelopment
H20	Extensions to dwellings
STRAT1	The overall strategy
STRAT5	Residential densities
TH1	The strategy for Thame
TRANS2	Promoting sustainable transport and accessibility
TRANS4	Transport assessments, transport statements and travel plans
TRANS5	Consideration of development proposals