



**TOWN AND COUNTRY  
PLANNING (GENERAL  
PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT)  
(ENGLAND) ORDER 2015  
(AS AMENDED)**

**PLANNING STATEMENT**

**Change of use from  
B1(a) Office into (C3) Residential  
to create 30, one bedroom self-  
contained flats**

**Arden House, West Street,  
Leighton Buzzard LU7 1DD**

**On behalf of  
Arden House West**

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## CONTENTS

	<b>Page No</b>
1. Introduction	3
2. Site Description and Surroundings	3
3. Proposed Development	4
4. Relevant Planning History	4
5. Planning Legislation and Appraisal	5
6. Conclusion	9

## Appendices

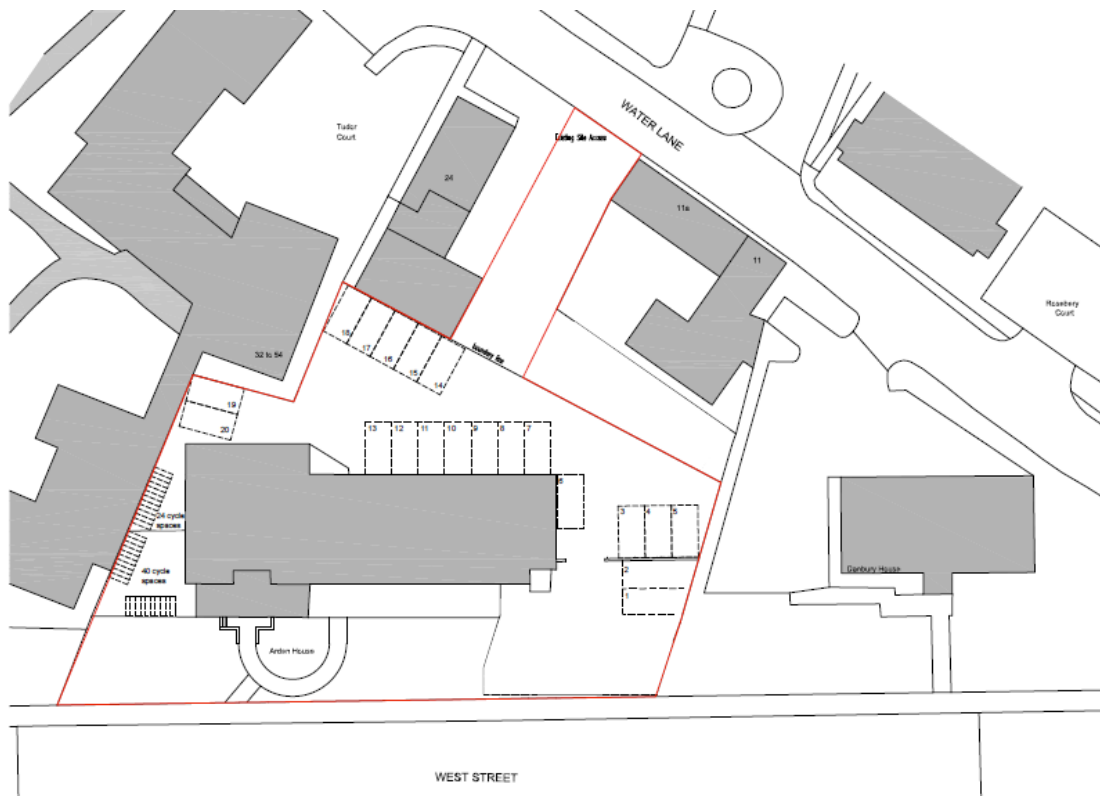
1. Officer's Report from application CB/16/01187/PADO

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared in support of a Prior Approval application under Class O, Part 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (GPDO) for change of use from B1(a) (Office) to C3 (Residential) to create 30, one bedroom self-contained flats at Arden House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to review the legislation and criteria that are relevant to the determination of the application and to present a case for granting approval.

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is located on the north side of West Street, Leighton Buzzard.



*Site identified in red*

- 2.2 The site comprises an office building ranging between three and five storeys in height. Associated car parking is provided to the side and rear. The building is constructed of red brick and has a flat roof.



*Front elevation of Arden House*

- 2.3 The building is currently vacant but was formerly in B1(a) Office use.
- 2.4 Off-street parking is provided on a large area of hardstanding to the side and rear of the building. There is an existing cycle shelter on the western side of the building.
- 2.5 The site is not located in a Conservation Area and the building is not Statutory Listed.

### **3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 3.1 Prior approval is sought for the change of use of the existing building from Class B1(a) Office use to Class C3 Residential use consisting of 30, one bedroom self-contained flats.
- 3.2 There would be six units on the ground floor, eight units on each of the first and second floors, and four units on each of the third and fourth floors.
- 3.3 No external changes to the building are proposed. One new ground floor window will be inserted on the north facing rear elevation of the building to serve unit four on the ground floor. However, this does not form part of this Prior Approval and will be subject to a separate planning application. The planning application for the proposed window will be submitted shortly after the validation of this application.
- 3.4 Vehicular access to the site would be retained from the south side, Water Lane. A total of 20 parking spaces would be provided.

### **4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 Application reference CB/16/01187/PADO – Prior notification of change of use from offices to 18 flats with parking – Approved 9 May 2016.
- 4.2 Application reference CB/17/01692/PADO – Prior notification of change of use of third floor office to 2 flats – Approved 25 May 2017.
- 4.3 Application reference CB/17/01686/PADO – Prior notification of change of use of second floor office to 5 flats – Approved 25 May 2017.

- 4.4 Application reference CB/17/01688/PADO – Prior notification of change of use of first floor office to 5 flats – 25 May 2017.
- 4.5 Application reference CB/17/01658/PADO – Prior notification of change of use of ground floor office to 4 flats – Approved 25 May 2017.
- 4.6 Application reference CB/17/01646/PADO – Prior notification of change of use of fourth floor office to 2 two bed flats – Approved 25 May 2017.

## 5. PLANNING LEGISLATION AND APPRAISAL

- 5.1 Class O, Part 3, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), allows for the change of use of a building and any land within its curtilage, from a use falling within Class B1(a) (Offices) to a use falling within Class C3 (Dwellinghouses) of that Schedule.

- 5.2 Change of use is not permitted by Class O if:-

*a) the building is on article 2(5) land and an application under paragraph O.2(1) in respect of the development is received by the local planning authority on or before 30th May 2019*

- 5.3 Article 2(5) land relates to certain areas that are identified in the General Permitted Development Order as being exempt from the Class O regulations. The site is not located within any of the areas that are listed as exempt. **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**

*b) the building was not used for a use falling within Class B1(a) (offices) of the Schedule to the Use Classes Order—*

*(i) on 29th May 2013, or*

*(ii) in the case of a building which was in use before that date but was not in use on that date, when it was last in use*

- 5.4 The building is currently vacant but was formerly in B1(a) Office use. Business Rates records confirm that all floors of the building are designated '*offices and premises*'. Furthermore, the current use of the building, as offices, has been agreed by the Council in the earlier Prior Approval applications in 2016 and 2017 respectively (see relevant planning history above). The use of the building on 29 March 2013 was therefore B1(a) Office and still is currently. **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**

*c) the site is, or forms part of, a safety hazard area;*

- 5.5 The site is not located in safety hazard area. **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**

*d) the site is, or forms part of, a military explosives storage area;*

- 5.6 The site is not located in a military explosives storage area. **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**

*e) the building is a listed building or is within the curtilage of a listed building; or*

5.7 The building is not Statutory Listed and does not fall within the curtilage of a Listed Building. **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**

*f) the site is, or contains, a scheduled monument.*

5.8 The site is not a Scheduled Ancient Monument. **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**

5.9 The proposal would therefore comply with the criteria set out in Class O.1 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2015 and as such the application needs to be assessed against the required conditions set out in paragraph O.2, which are as follows:-

- transport and highways impacts of the development
- contamination risks on the site
- flooding risks on the site
- impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development

5.10 The above matters are considered in turn within the following sections.

#### **Transport and highways impacts of the development**

5.11 Access to the site is currently provided from the south side of Water Lane via an existing vehicle crossover. This arrangement would remain unchanged and would adequately cater for the proposed change of use. It is noted that the Highway Authority did not raise any concerns with regards to access on the previous Prior Approval applications approved at the site (see relevant planning history above).

5.12 A new parking layout has been devised for the proposed conversion; this provides 20 off-street parking spaces.

5.13 The existing B1(a) offices equate to approximately 1335 square metres, which according to local parking standards (Central Bedfordshire Design Guide) would require a minimum of 45 off-street parking spaces.

5.14 According to local parking standards each of the proposed one bedroom flats would require a minimum provision of one off-street parking space; therefore 30 in total. In addition, 8 visitor parking spaces would be required. The proposed use would therefore require 7 less off-street parking spaces than the existing offices.

5.15 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local parking standards should take into account, amongst other things, the accessibility of the development, the availability of, and opportunities for, public transport and local car ownership levels.

5.16 Arden House is very sustainably located, close to Leighton Buzzard town centre. It is situated opposite Waterborne Walk Shopping Centre which provides a supermarket (Waitrose) as well as other day-to-day amenities, and is just a 3 minute walk from the High Street. It is also within walking distance of the mainline railway station (11 minute walk). In

addition, West Street forms a major bus route locally, linking the site to surrounding towns and villages.

- 5.17 The office building currently has 15 parking spaces, equating to an existing parking shortfall of 30 spaces. As set out above, the existing parking area has been surveyed and a new layout has been devised, increasing the number of spaces on site to 20. The proposed scheme would therefore have a parking shortfall of 18 spaces, which is significantly less than that of the existing office building. The proposed scheme would therefore result in a substantial parking improvement.
- 5.18 As well as the parking spaces, 64 secure cycle spaces would be provided on the western side of the building. This number complies with local standards.
- 5.19 A Transport Statement prepared by YES Engineering Group Limited has been provided with the application. This shows that the proposed car parking arrangements would adequately cater for the proposed flats, and would represent a significant improvement on the existing parking situation. Furthermore, the report details the highly sustainable location of the site, explains that 30% of households in the area do not own a vehicle, and shows that vehicle movements associated with the proposed use, during peak hours, would be low.
- 5.20 The proposed parking and access arrangements would therefore adequately cater for the proposed use. **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**

#### Contamination risks on the site

- 5.21 The Council has previously confirmed that there are no contamination risks at the site (see copy of Officer's Report from application CB/16/01187/PADO – [Appendix 1](#)). **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**

#### Flooding risks on the site

- 5.22 The site is located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3, as shown on the Environment Agency's Map below:-



*Extract from Environment Agency's Flood Map  
Site falls outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3*

- 5.23 All land outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 falls within Flood Zone 1. Sites in Flood Zone 1 have a very low probability of flooding (1 in 1000 per year or 0.1% chance). As a result there are no flooding risks in relation to the units.
- 5.24 The Council has previously confirmed that there are no flood risks at the site (see copy of Officer's Report from application CB/16/01187/PADO – [Appendix 1](#)). **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**

#### **Impacts of noise from commercial premises**

- 5.25 The site is located within a mixed residential and commercial area. Surrounding commercial uses are all very low impact comprising office based businesses.
- 5.26 The Council has previously confirmed that there are noise risks at the site (see copy of Officer's Report from application CB/16/01187/PADO – [Appendix 1](#)). **The proposal therefore complies with this criterion.**



## CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Prior Approval of the Local Authority is not required as to transport and highways impacts of the development, contamination risks on the site, flooding risks on the site or noise impacts when considered against Class O of Part 3 of Schedule 2 of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended by The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2016.