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<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P08/E0879</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL
<b>REGISTERED</b>	11.07.2008
<b>PARISH</b>	HENLEY-ON-THAMES
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Miss Lorraine Hillier Ms Joan Bland
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Blue Space Property Group Ltd
<b>SITE</b>	The Malthouse 45 New Street Henley-on-Thames
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Conversion of undercroft to one bed residential dwelling
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	As clarified by letters from Architect dated 22 and 26 August 2008.
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	476253/182856
<b>OFFICER</b>	Ms P.A.Fox
<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P08/E0828/LB</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
<b>REGISTERED</b>	11.07.2008
<b>PARISH</b>	HENLEY-ON-THAMES
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Miss Lorraine Hillier Ms Joan Bland
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These applications are referred to the Planning Committee because the recommendation differs to the views of the Town Council.
- 1.2 The application property comprises part of the ground floor of a former stable block. The building, which has a two storey appearance, has residential accommodation on the first and second floors. It lies within a gated courtyard which is accessed off New Street. The building lies immediately adjacent to the Malthouse, a Grade II listed building, recently converted into 11 apartments. Both buildings were originally part of the Brakspears Brewery complex and, as a result of the building's historical association with the Malthouse, the former stable building is deemed to be a curtilage listed building. The site lies with the town centre and Henley's main Conservation Area. It is identified on the plan **attached** as Appendix A.

## 2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of and external alterations to an undercroft area to create a one bed roomed flat. Listed building consent is required for the internal and external alterations to facilitate the conversion.

- 2.2 As referred to in the introduction the building to which this application relates was formally part of the Brakspears Brewery complex. The use of this site as a brewery ceased in the early 1980's. The Malthouse was converted into offices and the stable building was converted into four residential units in the mid 1980's. The residential accommodation is located at first and second floor levels, with the undercroft areas having largely been left open such that they could be used for storage and/or car parking. In the case of the application property, the undercroft is owned by the applicants, Blue Space Property Group, but two flats immediately above (1 and 2 Brakspear's Mews) are in separate ownership.
- 2.3 The application property has a number of existing openings, two of which are currently filled with metal louvers. The intention is to remove these and install new timber windows in the original openings, the details of which would match the Malthouse. One new door would be installed beneath an existing staircase that provides access to 1 Brakspears Mews. The existing suspended ceiling would be removed and renewed, with insulation being added. The existing block paved floor would also be removed and upgraded, masonry walls would be lined and new insulated timber partitions would be inserted. A small paved area lies immediately to the west of the property and this is shown on the plans to serve as an amenity area with cycle and bin storage space. Pedestrian access to the property would be gained across the private car parking area which serves the 11 flats in the Malthouse. No dedicated car parking space is proposed for the new unit. Extracts from the plans and a copy of the Architect's Design and Access statement are **attached** as Appendix B and Appendix C respectively. The statement explains the sustainability measures that are intended to be incorporated in the conversion. Photographs of the property are **attached** as Appendix D.

### 3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

- 3.1 Henley-on-Thames Town Council - Unneighbourly, loss of parking and overdevelopment.
- OCC (Highways) - No objection. Given the sustainable location of the development close to local amenities no additional car parking spaces will need to be provided. There are no highway safety concerns as a result of the development.
- Environmental Services - No objection.
- Conservation Officer - No objection subject to conditions.
- Henley Society - Conversion would represent an overdevelopment of the close. The previous decision to allocate this space for garage accommodation should be upheld.

- Neighbours
- Letters of objection from 7 local residents raising the following points:
    - proposal will destroy the design and symmetry of the existing building adversely affecting its character
    - all the courtyard car parking spaces are allocated to the 11 flats within The Malthouse and there is no dedicated car parking
    - harm to the amenities of the flats above on grounds of noise and disturbance generated by use of the flat and its amenity space
    - the paved amenity area (to the west of the application property) is designated as a common area and should not be designated for the proposed flat
    - a shared recycle bin facility should be provided
    - the proposal will cause disruption to the current residents of The Malthouse and mews flats
    - will restrict access of the current flat owners to services presently located in the undercroft
    - additional vents and meters will detract from neighbours flats
    - the new property will be dark and dungeon like

#### 4.0 **PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 The use of the site as a brewery ceased in the early 1980's.

4.2 In 1984 the building, together with others within the courtyard, was subject of applications which sought permission for the change of use of The Malthouse to an office and the conversion of the stable building into 4 residential units. Planning permission and listed building consent were refused by the Council but granted at appeal in February 1986.

4.3 In 2005 and 2007 planning permission and listed building consent were granted for the conversion of The Malthouse to 11 flats. The later consents were implemented and the flats are now occupied.

4.4 Applications P07/E1087 and P07/E1517 seek planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of a pair of gates in the arched aperture on the application property. It is anticipated that approvals will be granted under delegated powers.

#### 5.0 **PLANNING POLICIES**

5.1 South Oxfordshire Local Plan Policies:

G2 – Protection and enhancement of the environment

G5 – Making best use of land

G6 – Promoting good design

H4 – New housing in towns and larger villages

H11 – The sub-division of dwellings

- D1 – Good design and local distinctiveness
- D2 – Vehicle and bicycle parking
- D3 – Plot coverages and garden areas
- D4 – Privacy and daylight
- D9 – Renewable energy
- D10 – Waste management
- T1 – Transport requirement
- T2 – Car parking requirements
- CON2 & 3 - Alterations and extensions to listed buildings
- CON4 – Use and changes of use of listed buildings
- CON5 – The setting of listed buildings
- CON6 & 7 – Proposals affecting a Conservation Area

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008  
PPG15, PPS3 and PPG15

## 6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 In respect of the planning application the principal issues are:

- i) Whether the alteration and use of the building would respect the character and features of the undercroft as a Grade II curtilage building.
- ii) Whether the proposal would respect the setting of surrounding listed buildings and the character of the Conservation Area
- iii) Whether there would be harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties
- iv) Whether the proposal provides an appropriate quality of living environment
- v) Whether the proposals would result in any other environmental or highway objection

In respect of the listed building application the only issue is whether the alterations and use of the building would respect the character and features of the building.

### **i & ii) Whether the alteration and use would respect the character of the listed building, its setting and the Conservation Area**

- 6.2 The site lies within the town centre, surrounded by residential development on all sides, and the principal of a residential use is acceptable. Whilst not listed in its own right, the building is curtilage listed and forms part of a group that were originally associated with Brakspears Brewery. Policy CON4 allows for a change of use of a listed building provided its character and features of special interest are protected. PPG15 advises that the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to keep them in active use. The undercroft area is currently not in active use, being open and unused. It is understood that it was previously used for car parking and accommodated air conditioning units in connection with the former use of The Malthouse as an office.
- 6.3 The conversion of the first and second floors of the building to 4 flats in the mid 1980's involved changes to the original appearance of the stables and in your Officers' opinion the building now has a residential character. The scheme will involve removing some rather unsightly brown metal louvers and installing new timber fenestration. A new door will be installed and one of the undercroft's five apertures will be filled with full length glazed doors. Hence there will some change to the appearance of the building. Whilst the loss of one of the five remaining arched apertures would further erode some of the stable building's original character, Officers consider that the installation of recessed glazed timber doors would not detract from the building's existing appearance. The Conservation Officer has not objected to the proposed internal or external alterations on the basis that she considers the conversion work would not diminish the building's

current level of historic and special interest.

- 6.4 Officers have therefore concluded that the alterations associated with the conversion are generally sympathetic in their approach and that residential use is compatible with the fabric and appearance of the existing building. Furthermore the relatively low key external alterations to the building would not detract from the setting of The Malthouse or the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. On this basis the proposal meets the requirements of Policies CON3, CON4, CON5 and CON7.

**iii) The impact on the amenities of neighbours**

- 6.5 The owners of the flats known as 1 and 2 Brakspears Mews (which lie above the proposed flat and are in separate ownership) together with the owners of some of the flats in the Malthouse have raised strong objections to the scheme. In your Officer's opinion there would not be any direct loss of privacy or light to those neighbours. Sound insulation would be required under Building Regulations and should ensure that there would not be any undue noise and disturbance between the respective flats. It is recognised that the use of the walled courtyard to the west of the application property as an amenity area could result in some noise and disturbance to the flat immediately above (1 Brakspears Mews) which has principal windows overlooking the space and, to a lesser extent, some of the units in The Malthouse. However given the property's location in the town centre and that such an arrangement is not unusual in flat schemes, Officers do not consider it would be reasonable to oppose its use as an amenity area in connection with the new residential unit. The rights of other owners to use this space would not be affected by the grant of planning permission.
- 6.6 The owners of 1 & 2 Brakspears Mews have expressed concerns about their ability to access services within the undercroft but this is a private rather than planning matter and not a reason to withhold permission. Hence your officer's opinion is that the impact on the amenities of the nearest neighbours would not be unacceptable or conflict with the requirements of policies D4 and H4 of the Local Plan.

**iv) The quality of the living environment**

- 6.7 The fenestration in the new flat would be limited to the southern and western elevations and, as a result some of the rooms, would not have natural ventilation (2 bathrooms) and the large living area/dining/kitchen area would only be served by the glazed doors in the arched aperture. However, in your Officer's opinion the internal layout of the flat and the quality of living environment would still be of an appropriate standard for a relatively small unit in a town centre location.
- 6.8 The walled courtyard to the west is shown to serve as an amenity space, and to provide cycle and bin storage. The other flats within the immediate area do not enjoy private amenity areas of this size. Whilst the area receives very limited levels of sunlight due to the very substantial Malthouse building lying directly to the south, it will still provide a useful area of outdoor space. The plans indicate that a fence would be erected to separate the amenity area from the pedestrian access to some of the flats within the Malthouse. The owners of some of those flats and 1, Brakspears Mews have stated that they believe they are entitled to use this space and/or have a right of way over it. This again is essentially a private matter and any such rights would not be affected by the grant of planning permission.
- 6.9 New developments are expected to demonstrate high standards in the conservation and efficient use of energy. This scheme obviously involves the use of an existing building and the architect's Design and Access Statement sets out the energy saving

measures that would be incorporated in the residential conversion. These include the use of locally sourced materials, high levels of insulation and water conservation measures. The plans indicate that storage space would be provided for recyclables. In the light of the above the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of policies D1, D3, D8 and D10.

**v) Whether there are any other environmental or highway objections**

6.10 The plans indicate that there will not be any dedicated car parking provision for the new flat. This is a highly sustainable location with a full range of facilities within easy walking distance, and public transport is available for both shorter and longer distances. The Highway Authority has indicated they have no objection to the unit having no parking provision, which is the situation for many residents with properties in New Street. The plans indicate that space for the storage of cycles would be accommodated with the amenity area. As such the scheme would not conflict with the requirements of policies D2 and T2.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposal is considered to comply with the relevant policies within the Council's Development Plan as it would involve the sympathetic conversion of a listed building to provide a relatively small unit of accommodation in a highly sustainable location. Subject to the recommended conditions, the conversion work would provide an appropriate living environment in the town centre that would not harm the character or appearance of the listed building, its setting or the area, nor would it have an undue impact on the amenities of local residents.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Standard 3 year commencement**
2. **New works to be finished to match the adjacent work**
3. **Materials to be submitted**
4. **Detailed drawings of windows, vent grilles and meter boxes to be submitted**
5. **Details of cycle storage to be submitted**

8.2 **That listed building consent be granted subject to the following conditions:**

1. **Listed building consent 3 year commencement**
2. **New works to be finished to match the adjacent work**
3. **Materials to be submitted**

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