

## **APPLICATION REPORT – 24/00868/FUL**

**Validation Date: 17 October 2024**

**Ward: Chorley North West**

**Type of Application: Full Planning**

**Proposal: Change of use of no. 11 St Georges Street to a 16no. bedroom house in multiple occupation, the erection of a single storey rear extension and a first floor rear extension**

**Location: Printing.com 11 St Georges Street Chorley PR7 2AA**

**Case Officer: Chris Smith**

**Applicant: MESSERS MJ & S McVERRY**

**Agent: Mr Lee Fenton**

**Consultation expiry: 7 November 2024**

**Decision due by: 12 December 2024**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. It is recommended that planning permission is granted, subject to conditions.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

2. The application site is located within the settlement area of Chorley as defined by the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 on the northern side of St George's Street within the St George's Conservation area. The site contains a two storey, Grade II listed, mid terraced property. There are also Grade II listed buildings on either side of the site and to the south on the opposite side of St. George's Street. The immediate locality is a densely built-up urban environment containing a mix of uses typically found within a town centre including commercial services, restaurants, residential properties and the Grade II listed St George's Church at the eastern end of St George's Street.
3. The property is currently vacant, however, its last use, and current lawful planning use, is as a printing and stationery business. This has been the lawful use of the property since the grant of planning application ref: 81/00397/FUL, and there have been no intervening uses between the time of this application and the current application.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

4. The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of no. 11 St George's Street to a 16no. bedroom house in multiple occupation along with the erection of a single storey rear extension and a first-floor rear extension.
5. It should be noted that the proposed development has been amended since first being received by the Council at the request of the case officer. Amended plans have been submitted following concerns raised by the Council's Heritage Adviser regarding the internal configuration of the development and the proposal to block the existing front entrance. Subsequent to this, amended floorplans were submitted reducing the number of rooms from 17 to 16 to enable the retention of the front entrance.

## REPRESENTATIONS

6. One representation has been received citing the following grounds of objection to the proposed development:
  - The Council has not provided a comprehensive list of existing houses in multiple occupation
  - This lack of transparency leaves the community unaware of the density of HMOs
  - Application should be postponed until this information has been provided
  - Lack of infrastructure to support the proposed development.
  - Police do not respond to minor crimes.
  - Long waiting time for GP appointments
  - Increased demand for public transport will contribute to CO2 and NOX emissions
  - Sewage
  - Energy supply

## CONSULTATIONS

7. Chorley Council's Environment Health Officer – Have stated that they have no objections to the proposed development, however, there remains insufficient detail in terms of the Council's HMO minimum amenity standards specifically in terms of the shared facilities and space, kitchen facilities, fire safety and ventilation, however, these matters can be further reviewed at the HMO licence application stage.
8. Lancashire Highway Services (LCC Highways) – Have stated that they do not have any objections to the proposed development and are of the opinion that it would not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site.

## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Principle of the development

9. Paragraph 90 of The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) states that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management, and adaptation. Planning policies should:
  - f) recognise that residential development often plays an important role in ensuring the vitality of centres and encourage residential development on appropriate sites.
10. The lawful use of the site is for a stationery and printing business, which is considered to be an employment use and must therefore be considered in relation to Policy 10 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012).
11. Policy 10 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy states that all existing employment premises and sites last used for employment will be protected for employment use. There will be a presumption that 'Best Urban' and 'Good Urban' sites will be retained for B use class employment use. Proposals on all employment sites/premises for re-use or redevelopment other than B use class employment uses will be assessed under the following criteria:
  - (a) There would not be an unacceptable reduction on the type, quality or quantity of employment land supply:**
12. The proposed development would result in the loss of approximately 295 square metres of employment floorspace. Given that the adopted Core Strategy sets the overall employment requirement for Chorley as 112ha to 2026, this is considered to be a very modest amount of floorspace and its loss would not result in an unacceptable reduction in the type, quality or quantity of employment land supply in the borough. There remains an ample choice of employment land offering various sizes, types and tenures.

**(b) The provision and need for the proposed use:**

13. It is also considered that there would be social and economic benefits through the provision of 16no. new dwelling units, which is in accordance with the aims of the Framework. Paragraph 60 of the Framework states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed.

**(c) The relative suitability of the site for employment and for the alternative use:**

14. The application site is a mid-terrace property that has been used as a stationery and printing business for a considerable period of time. Prior to this the property had been used as a store/ancillary offices as part of a butchers on Chapel Street and it is noted that St George's Street contains a variety of commercial uses including a dentist, offices and a restaurant. The site is clearly a suitable one for the current lawful employment use and whilst its loss would be regrettable, there are many vacant premises in Chorley town centre of a similar type, size and quality, which could potentially be used for a printing business.
15. Furthermore, it could be argued that the last lawful use of the site as a printing business would in fact be within the former Use Class B1(c) 'industrial processes which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity' and which has now been incorporated into the new Use Class E. Policy 10 pre-dates the changes to the use class order and makes no reference to Class E. Furthermore, there are a range of permitted changes of use that can take place in relation to Class E, which would result in the loss of an employment use to another use. It is therefore debatable as to whether the assessment set out under policy 10 can be applied in this instance, and notwithstanding this a realistic fall-back position exists whereby a change of use could take place in any event.

**(d) The location of the site and its relationship to other uses:**

16. The use would not have any impact on other uses within the area. It is considered that it would complement the other uses.

**(e) Whether the ability to accommodate smaller scale requirements would be compromised;**

17. The application site currently provides a modest amount of employment floorspace and therefore its loss would compromise smaller scale requirements to some extent. The impact would, however, be limited and the ability to re-use the building for employment uses in future would not be compromised as the building would require very little alteration to accommodate such use.

**(f) There would be a net improvement in amenity:**

18. It is not considered that the proposed development would represent a more intensive use of the site than the current lawful use of the site as a printing business, and, therefore, it is not considered that the proposed development would have a significantly greater or more adverse impact the amenity of the area than the previous use. Furthermore, it is considered that there would be a net improvement in amenity, particularly during daytime hours, on the basis that the proposed use would generate less vehicular traffic and fewer comings and goings during these hours than the previous use.
19. Given that the application site is a relatively small employment premises, its loss would be limited and the ability to use the building for employment uses in the future would not be comprised. It is considered, therefore, that the development is in compliance with policy 10 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy and that the proposed change of use is acceptable in principle.

#### Design and impact on the character of the area

20. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 – 2026 states that planning permission will be granted for new development, including extensions, conversions and free-standing structures, provided that:

a) the proposal does not have a significantly detrimental impact on the surrounding area by virtue of its density, siting, layout, building to plot ratio, height, scale and massing, design, orientation and use of materials.

21. Some relatively minor elevational alterations to the front elevation of the existing building are proposed, including the re-instatement of the original front entrance door and the painting and sanding of the existing original windows. It is considered that these alterations would make a positive contribution to the visual appearance of the building by reinstating and helping to maintain some of the buildings original features. Rooflights would also be added in addition to the reinstatement of windows in the north facing rear elevation and side facing east elevation. Subject to the use of appropriate heritage fittings and an appropriate quality of finish, including deep window and door way reveals, it is not considered that the proposed development would be harmful to the character of the listed building or it's surroundings. It is recommended that conditions requiring details of window and door fittings is attached to any grant of planning permission.

22. Whilst the proposed development would involve the erection of a single storey rear extension and a first-floor rear extension, which in terms of design and facing materials would represent contemporary additions that would contrast with the more traditional aesthetic of the existing building, the additions would be contained to the rear of the building where they would be well screened and largely concealed from the streetscene.

23. On the basis of the above the development would not be harmful to the character of the area, thereby complying with Chorley Local Plan policy BNE1.

#### Impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers

24. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 states that planning permission will be granted for new development, including extensions, conversions and free standing structures, provided that:

b) the development would not cause harm to any neighbouring property by virtue of overlooking, overshadowing or by creating overbearing impacts.

25. The immediate locality contains a mix of uses and is mainly characterised by densely built-up terraced properties located along both side of St George's Street and also to the rear (north) at Chapel Street. To the front (south) the site faces directly towards the neighbouring property at no. 22 St George's Street. While the resultant building would contain habitable room windows at first floor level, it is not considered that any impacts upon the amenity of neighbouring occupiers as a result of privacy loss, would be significantly greater or worse than any impacts which would have previously occurred, and which could still occur as a result of the existing lawful use of the building as a printing business. To its rear (north) the site faces directly towards no. 28 Chapel Street which contains a retail unit. To the east the site adjoins with a language school at no. 13 St George's Street, however, any impacts on this neighbour or the occupiers of the dwelling at no. 9 St George's Street to the west, are considered to be no greater than those which previously occurred as a result of the use of the site as a printing business.

26. In consideration of the amenity of future occupiers of the building it is noted that there is a high concentration of rooms relative to the overall floor space of the building. A number of bedrooms only just meet the minimum standards set out in the Council's 'Houses In Multiple Occupation – Guide & Amenity Standard 2024', whilst several bedrooms and the kitchens are entirely reliant on rooflights for light and ventilation. This results in a less than ideal form

of accommodation that would not provide desirable standards of habitation, however, there are no planning standards by which such accommodation could be clearly resisted in the assessment of a planning application. Whilst it is noted that the Council's Environment Health Officer has stated that they have no objections these matters would be further reviewed at the HMO licence application stage.

27. Having regard to the above, the proposal is considered to accord with Chorley Local Plan policy BNE1 in respect of amenity.

Impact on designated heritage assets

28. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act) sets out the primary duty that a Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Great weight and importance is attached to this duty.

29. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) at Chapter 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It sets out that in determining planning applications LPAs should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

30. Paragraph 212 states that when considering the impact of proposals on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be applied. This is irrespective of whether any harm is identified as being substantial, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

31. Paragraph 213 states that any harm or loss of significance to a designated heritage asset (from alteration or destruction or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.

32. Paragraph 215 states that where a development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

33. The adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy (2012) policy 16 (Heritage Assets) states: Protect and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment, heritage assets and their settings by:

- a) Safeguarding heritage assets from inappropriate development that would cause harm to their significances.
- b) Supporting development or other initiatives where they protect and enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that will improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition, or at risk.
- c) Identifying and adopting a local list of heritage assets for each Authority.

34. Chorley Local Plan 2012 - 2026 policy BNE8 (Protection and Enhancement of Heritage Assets) states that:

- a) Applications affecting a Heritage Asset or its setting will be granted where it:
  - i. Is in accordance with the Framework and relevant Historic England guidance;
  - ii. Where appropriate, takes full account of the findings and recommendations in the Council's Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Proposals;
  - iii. Is accompanied by a satisfactory Heritage Statement (as defined by Chorley Council's advice on Heritage Statements) and;

b) Applications will be granted where they sustain, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance, appearance, character and setting of the heritage asset itself and the surrounding historic environment and where they show consideration for the following:

- i. The conservation of features and elements that contribute to the heritage asset's significance and character. This may include: chimneys, windows and doors, boundary treatments, original roof coverings, earthworks or buried remains, shop fronts or elements of shop fronts in conservation areas, as well as internal features such as fireplaces, plaster cornices, doors, architraves, panelling and any walls in listed buildings;
- ii. The reinstatement of features and elements that contribute to the heritage asset's significance which have been lost or damaged;
- iii. The conservation and, where appropriate, the enhancement of the setting of heritage assets;
- iv. The removal of additions or modifications that are considered harmful to the significance of any heritage asset. This may include the removal of pebbledash, paint from brickwork, non-original style windows, doors, satellite dishes or other equipment;
- v. The use of the Heritage Asset should be compatible with the conservation of its significance. Whilst the original use of a building is usually the most appropriate one it is recognised that continuance of this use is not always possible. Sensitive and creative adaptation to enable an alternative use can be achieved and innovative design solutions will be positively encouraged;
- vi. Historical information discovered during the application process shall be submitted to the Lancashire Historic Environment Record.

35. The policy also states that development involving the demolition or removal of significant heritage assets, or parts thereof, will be granted only in exceptional circumstances that have been clearly and convincingly demonstrated to be in accordance with the requirements of the Framework.

36. The key considerations in respect of the impact of the proposal on the heritage asset are whether the proposed development would:

- Whether the proposed development would harm the significance of the setting of the listed buildings – nos. 9 to 27 St George's Street and the Church of St George.
- Whether the proposed development will harm the significance of the listed building 'The Old Coach House' (nos. 16 to 28 St George's Street).
- Whether the proposed development will harm the character or appearance of the St George's Conservation Area.

## **Assessment**

### *The impact on the listed building -*

37. The existing property is a mid-nineteenth century townhouse in Flemish bond on a stone plinth with a moulded stone doorcase and it fronts the north side of St George's Street in Chorley Town Centre. The property's significance is based largely on its historic, aesthetic and group values, primarily evidenced through the building's fabric, materials, architectural form and design and its group value within the terrace and surrounding listed properties. An attached former coach house to the rear has been much altered and has shuttered openings. As a listed building in a Conservation Area, high significance is attributed to the property.

38. It is considered that the proposed development would ensure that the building is brought into an active use which is the best way to help sustain the significance of the listed building and its importance to the Conservation Area. With regards to the proposed rear extensions, the coach house at the rear of the building is a 19<sup>th</sup> century brick built ancillary building historically connected to the terrace, however, it has been much altered and surrounded by modern infill development on all sides except from the front (east) and still has a historic yard and access from St Georges Street. The proposed extensions would be located on either side of the central outshut which will in effect provide the appearance of a flush gable frontage. The proposed extensions will be clad with standing seam zinc effect cladding to provide distinction from the old and new and the cladding will extend to the ground floor on

the north side. Overall, given the cumulative development to the rear, it is not considered that these elements will cause any further harm to the listed building.

39. Internally, the proposed plans show that the building will be heavily sub-divided to provide the multiple units. In this regard, it is considered that the proposed development will erode the significance of the listed building somewhat. However, the front entrance and hallway and left side 'service alley' is to be retained and as a result the historic plan form of the building would be retained. With regards to internal features, it is noted that photographic evidence submitted with the application shows that original timber carpentry and plaster corncicing appear to be limited to the front room of the property and the hallway, whilst at the rear of the property, it is evident that the building has been altered substantially overtime which has led to the loss of the majority of historic features. The plans submitted with the application denote the position of the historic features and propose to retain them in their entirety. Consequently, from a heritage perspective it is considered that the internal configuration would cause no additional harm to the significance of the listed building. Furthermore, it is noted that the property's significance is based largely on its group value within the terrace and surrounding listed properties rather than its historic internal features.

*The impact on the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings -*

40. The character of the St George's Street Conservation Area is defined in its eclectic mix of nineteenth century public, commercial and domestic buildings built around St George's Church. It is considered that the significant character of the Conservation Area derives from the strong focal point that the church provides in the view down St Georges Street and the frontage properties of St George's Street, Church Street and Chapel Street.
41. It is considered that, the proposals for the rear would have no impact on the Conservation Area or the setting of the listed buildings. The original front entrance door to the property is to be reinstated and it is considered that this would have a positive impact on the Conservation Area.

*Conclusion –*

42. Having regard to the above, the proposed development is considered to meet the statutory test 'to preserve' and would cause no discernible harm to the character and appearance of the St George's Conservation Area and there would be no discernible harm caused to the collective significance of the listed buildings.
43. It is considered that the proposal would meet the statutory test of the Act 'to preserve' and is acceptable in design terms. The proposed development accords with the objectives of Chapter 16 of the Framework, policy BNE8 of the Chorley Local Plan and Policy 16 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy.

Parking and highway safety

44. Policy BNE1 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012 -2026 stipulates that planning permission will be granted for new development, including extensions, conversions and free-standing structures, provided that:
- d) the residual cumulative highways impact of the development is not severe and it would not prejudice highway safety, pedestrian safety, the free flow of traffic, and would not reduce the number of on-site parking spaces to below the standards stated in Site Allocations Policy – Parking Standards, unless there are other material considerations which justify the reduction.
45. The application site does not contain any parking provision and the application does not propose any. However, LCC Highways have stated that they do not have any objections to the proposed development and that they are of the opinion that it would not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity, or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site. They have also stated that the site is within a sustainable area. Indeed, the site is located within Chorley Town Centre immediately to the south of the primary shopping area and it is within walking distance of a wide range of shops, services, amenities, and public transportation links which are typically found within a town centre including a bus station and

a busy regional railway station. Consequently, it is considered that a relaxation in the car parking standards can be made as per the provisions of policy ST4 of the Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026.

46. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is limited off-street car parking availability within the immediate area, the site is positioned within a sustainable location in Chorley Town Centre and it is not, therefore, considered that the proposed development would prejudice highway or pedestrian safety.

#### Community Infrastructure Levy

47. The Chorley CIL Infrastructure Charging Schedule provides a specific amount for development. The CIL Charging Schedule was adopted on 16 July 2013 and charging commenced on 1 September 2013. The proposed development would be a chargeable development, and the charge is subject to indexation in accordance with the Council's Charging Schedule.

#### Other matters

##### Agent of change –

48. Paragraph 200 of the Framework states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs). Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.
49. The Framework recognises that a random distribution of noise sensitive accommodation throughout town centres which are more likely to contain long established late-night bars and entertainment uses, can add to tensions which could result in these entertainment activities being curtailed in the future through statutory noise nuisance action and enforcement. Due to the location of the application site in Chorley Town Centre there is potential for there to be noise impacts on the intended occupiers of the development from commercial premises. There is a well-established drinking establishment and restaurant (The Cosmopolitan) to the east of the site at no. 30 St George's Street. The venue operates during late night-time hours and there is, therefore, potential for there to be noise impacts on any future occupiers of the proposed development as a result of the activities associated with these neighbouring uses.
50. The application has been supported by the provision of a noise assessment technical note by Miller Goodall. The technical note states that noise survey works were previously undertaken on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in relation to the conversion of no. 28 St George's Street to an HMO which was approved by the Council under planning application ref: 24/00073/FUL. This property adjoins directly with the Cosmopolitan. Noise logging was undertaken within no. 28 St George's Street over a typical weekend to ensure that a representative period of operation was recorded within the building. It was considered that more noise would transfer directly through the party wall than would pass out from the Cosmopolitan to the environment as noise sources would be retained within the establishment. The Planning Officer's Committee Report for planning application ref: 24/00073/FUL concluded that the amenity of the future occupiers of the proposed HMO at no. 28 St George's Street, would not be harmed by the adjoining business, although this was subject to the implementation of suitable mitigation measures including the installation of suitable stud walls.
51. Due to the degree of separation between the site and the Cosmopolitan (approximately 28m) and given that unlike no. 28 St George's Street the site does not adjoin with this commercial premises, it is not considered that the amenity of the future occupiers of the HMO at no. 11 St George's Street would be significantly or adversely harmed by this



neighbouring business or any other neighbouring businesses. Consequently, the proposed development (the agent of change) is unlikely to lead to any unreasonable restrictions being placed upon existing neighbouring businesses.

## **CONCLUSION**

52. The proposed development is acceptable in principle, and it would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the existing site or the surrounding area, whilst it would have the benefit of providing a viable end use to a disused listed building. It would not cause any significant harm to the amenity of neighbouring residents, whilst there are no clear grounds to resist the sub optimal level of accommodation that would be provided for future occupiers. There are no adverse impacts in relation to matters of highway safety or the significance of the identified heritage assets.

53. It is, therefore, considered that on balance the development is acceptable and it is recommended that the application is approved, subject to conditions.

**RELEVANT POLICIES:** In accordance with s.38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), the application is to be determined in accordance with the development plan (the Central Lancashire Core Strategy, the Adopted Chorley Local Plan 2012-2026 and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance), unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Consideration of the proposal has had regard to guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the development plan. The specific policies/guidance considerations are contained within the body of the report.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY OF THE SITE**

**Ref:** 81/00397/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 19 May 1981  
**Description:** Change of use to small offset printing and stationery business

**Ref:** 24/00646/FUL **Decision:** WDN **Decision Date:** 27 September 2024  
**Description:** Change of use of no. 11 St Georges Street to a 20no. bedroom house in multiple occupation, the erection of a single storey extension and a first floor extension to the side (east) elevation and the installation of two roof dormer extensions to the rear (north) elevation

**Ref:** 24/00647/LBC **Decision:** WDN **Decision Date:** 27 September 2024  
**Description:** Application for listed building consent for the change of use of no. 11 St Georges Street to a 20no. bedroom house in multiple occupation, the erection of a single storey extension and a first floor extension to the side (east) elevation and the installation of two roof dormer extensions to the rear (north) elevation

### Suggested Conditions

To follow.