

**Item D. 1**                      **06/00102/FUL**                      **Permit Full Planning Permission**

**Case Officer**                      **Miss Caron Taylor**

**Ward**                                      **Chorley North West**

**Proposal**                              **Conversion of existing nursing home into six flats,**

**Location**                              **17 Southport Road Chorley Lancashire PR7 1LB**

**Applicant**                              **Dr Azmi**

**Proposal:**                              The application is for the conversion of an existing nursing home into six flats.

**Background:**                              The application property is a three storey semi-detached Victorian property (currently standing empty) on Southport Road, Chorley. It is situated on the corner of an unadopted road and is in a group of similar villas that from an attractive entrance into the centre of Chorley when approached from the west. The property has been previously extended to the rear with flat roofed extensions.

The proposals are for six flats, three one bedroomed and three two bedroomed. A small extension will be constructed (2m x 2.5m with flat roof) in an existing recessed area towards the rear of the property to form a hall for Flat 3. Roof lights will also be inserted in an existing flat roof to serve bedrooms and a bathroom on the ground floor.

An existing fire escape on the east elevation of the property serving all three floors is to be removed as part of the proposals and the doors serving the fire escape will be partly bricked up to create windows to the new flats.

An existing guardrail to steps leading to the basement will be retained and the basement will be sub-divided into secure storage areas, each one designated to a flat.

It is proposed to provide three parking spaces on the unadopted road to the side of the property for use by the flats.

**Planning History:**                              The property was given permission to be used as a rest home in 1984 for 14 people, by permission 84/00099/COU. The existing fire escape was erected under this permission. The file from this time indicates that the property was previously used as bed-sitters.

Later in 1984 (84/00663/FUL) a lounge and bathroom extension was permitted in the form of a single storey flat roof extension to the rear, and a further small single storey flat roof extension was permitted in 2001 to form an office (01/00553/FUL).

**Planning Policy:**                              GN1: Settlement Policy – Main Settlements  
Interim Supplementary Planning Guidance - Windfall Housing Developments

**Consultations:** The Head of Environmental Services has no objection to the application.

Chorley Borough Council Highways state that this property is in an accessible location, and the parking shown is on an unadopted private road. Southport Road is bounded by no waiting restrictions and the surrounding areas are either subject to residents parking schemes or highly competing parking demands. Ideally more parking provision would be provided, as the provision of six new dwellings/flats would compound this problem.

Lancashire County Planning consider that the proposal would be contrary to Policy 12 of the adopted Joint Lancashire Structure Plan, as the existing housing supply would satisfy the annualised rates of provision up to 2006, and is likely to satisfy the annualised rate of provision for several years thereafter. Whilst the proposed development would only result in 6 new dwellings, there is concern that the cumulative impact of this proposal, together with similar proposals, may exacerbate the amount of over supply.

**Representations:** A letter has been received from no. 15 Southport Road. They state that their only criticism is that there may not be enough car parking spaces. If there are two people living in each flat, they may have a car each making 12 cars in total.

There is not room at the side of the property for so many cars. They would not want the residents of six flats to park on the side adjacent 15 Southport Road as they park their own cars there.

**Assessment:**

Design

In terms of design the proposals retain the property as it exists at present (albeit with the small extension described above). The original property as built is an attractive building in a prominent position. The flat roofed extensions at the rear/side that are out of keeping with the property are to be retained, and whilst ideally these would be demolished, it is not considered that their retention would warrant refusal of the application, especially as they are sited towards the rear of the property.

The removal of the fire escape on the east elevation is welcomed, as it is very prominent in the streetscene as the property is approached from the east.

Amenities

The only extension to the property as stated previously will be the construction of a small hall for Flat 3 within an existing recess on the rear single storey extension. This will not be visible from the property to the rear, 1A Windsor Road and in terms of its relationship to the adjacent property no. 15 Southport Road it will only involve the formation of a door, which will face the main road.

No new openings are proposed on the ground floor apart from the new door in the proposed extension; two existing doors and a window will be blocked up. At first floor level one new window is proposed that will serve a bedroom, formed from the part bricking up of the existing fire escape door. On the second floor, again a window serving a bedroom will be formed where the former fire escape door was, but an existing window, currently serving a bedroom on the same elevation will be bricked up as part of the proposals.

The conversion of the property to flats will obviously lead to existing rooms being put to alternative uses. In terms of the windows in the rear elevation, these currently serve a store on the first floor and will serve a bathroom under the proposals. At second floor level the only window facing the rear is a dormer that breaks the eaves. This currently serves a bedroom, and will also serve a bedroom in the proposed conversion. It is therefore not considered that the proposals will result in a loss of amenity for no. 1A Windsor Road. There are no privacy issues with the adjoining property at 15 Southport Road.

The windows on the front elevation comply with the interface guidelines in terms of the nearest property on the opposite site of Southport Road, number 14.

#### Highways

Although it would be desirable to have more parking at the property, 3 spaces have been designated and the property is in an accessible location close to the town centre. It is therefore considered that any harm that might exist by allowing the development is outweighed by the substantial benefit of putting a desirable building, in a prominent location back into use.

In addition, the property currently has a lawful use as a rest home, which in itself would create traffic from staff, servicing and visitors who would require parking. This must be a material consideration in deciding the application.

Regarding the letter from no. 15, the road where the parking is proposed is unadopted, and who parks on the land is therefore a private issue.

#### Windfall SPG

Current planning policy restricts new dwellings in the borough, although there are a number of exceptions.

Exception (j) of the policy allows the re-use and conversion of empty buildings that are sound and worthy of re-use provided they are within 400 metres of a designated shopping centre. Although an extension is proposed it is very minor in nature. It is therefore considered that the property does fall within this exception and so complies with this policy.

#### Housing Supply

Although County Planning have stated the proposal would be contrary to Policy 12 of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan, it is a conversion of an existing building and fully accords with local policy. The property is in a sustainable location close to Chorley Town Centre.

Policy DP1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (Regional Planning Guidance 13, March 2003), states that Development Plans should adopt a sequential approach to meeting development need with priority given to the effective use of existing buildings and infrastructure within urban areas, including the re-use or conversion of empty building (if they are sound and worthy of re-use and/or of architectural or historic interest) – particularly those which are accessible by way of public transport, walking or cycling.

As the proposal is the conversion of an empty building, sound and worthy of re-use the application accords with regional planning policy, along with the proposals complying with local housing supply policy. It is therefore considered that it would be difficult to substantiate a refusal on housing supply grounds.

**Conclusion:**

Along with the surrounding properties the application property adds greatly to the streetscene of Southport Road and its retention through re-use is desirable. Although this involves the retention of flat roofed extensions that are out of keeping with the property it is considered that the proposal complies with the Development Plan. Ideally, more parking would be supplied for the flats, however its lawful use as a rest home must be a material consideration in deciding the application and this use would itself create a demand for parking.

It is therefore considered that any harm that might exist by allowing the development is outweighed by the substantial benefit or putting a desirable building, in a prominent location back into use.

**Recommendation: Permit Full Planning Permission  
Conditions**

1. The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date of this permission.

*Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.*

2. The area of car parking shown on the deposited plan shall be hardsurfaced in tarmacadam, block pavements or other permanent material prior to the occupation of the building, unless otherwise first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

*Reason: To ensure a satisfactory off road parking surface in accordance with policy TR4 of the Adopted Chorley Borough Plan Review.*

3. The car parking facilities shown on the deposit plan shall be laid out and provided prior to the occupation of any of the flats; such parking facilities shall thereafter be permanently retained for that purpose.

*Reason: To ensure provision of off-street parking is provided in accordance with policy TR4 of the Chorley Borough Local Plan Review 2003.*

---