

Item D. 1 **06/00037/COU** **Permit Full Planning Permission**

Case Officer **Mrs Helen Lowe**

Ward **Clayton-le-Woods And Whittle-le-Woods**

Proposal **Change of use of existing dwelling to office.**

Location **2 Mill Lane Whittle-Le-Woods Lancashire PR6 7LX**

Applicant **Mr J Smith**

Proposal This application proposes the change of use of an existing residential property on Mill Lane in Whittle le Woods to offices, within class B1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987. No external alterations are proposed.

Planning Policy The following policies from the Adopted Chorley Borough Local Plan Review are considered relevant:

EP19: Development and Flood Risk
EM7: Employment Development in Residential Areas
TR4: Highway Development Control Criteria

The following national guidance is also considered relevant:

PPS6: Planning For Town Centres

Planning History There is no relevant planning history for the application property, however planning permission was granted for erection of an office and store building adjacent to the application property (ref. 9/03/00267/FUL). This building has now been erected and is in use.

Consultees Responses Head of Steetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment (Engineering Services): No comments.

Whittle le Woods Parish Council: No comments.

Third Party Representations One letter of objection has been received expressing concerns over the lack of parking facilities being provided and the existing problems with on street parking in the area.

Assessment The main issues to consider are whether the proposal complies with current policies regarding office developments, impact on highways safety, impact on neighbour amenity and impact on flood risk.

Policy

Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town centres was published in 2005. This sets out the Government's planning policies for town centres and main town centre uses. The key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by, amongst other things, focusing development in existing

centers. Included within the definition of town centre uses includes offices. Where office developments are proposed outside of town centres the applicant should be required to demonstrate need, that the development is of an appropriate scale, that there are no more central sites for the development, that there are no unacceptable impacts on existing centres and that the development is in an accessible location.

Due to the small scale nature of the proposal, and the reasonably accessible nature of the location, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to require the applicant to demonstrate that a sequential approach to site selection has been adopted.

Highway Safety

The applicant states that two people would be employed at the premises, however the plans provided show that three offices would be created (using two bedrooms and a family room) and the lounge would be converted into a reception area (each room measuring approximately 3.5 by 4m). The applicant has indicated that parking space would be made available at the adjacent property, No. 4. The approved parking layout at No. 4 provide for two off road parking spaces. The applicant has indicated that it is proposed to use the two premises separately, but as they are at present in single ownership, they are willing to share parking facilities.

The Adopted Lancashire Parking Standards require a maximum of three parking spaces to be provided (including one space for the mobility impaired) and a single secure cycle parking space for this proposal. The adjacent property (No. 4) was not required to provide mobility impaired spaces or bicycle storage. Policy TR4 of the Local Plan seeks to ensure that proposed developments satisfactorily mitigate any highway and transportation problems, including by the provision of off street parking.

There is a small area to the rear of the property which appears to have been used for parking previously, although this is small in size and would be awkward to manoeuvre into. Although the application property and adjacent property are presently in the same ownership, this may change in the future. The level of off-street parking provided at No.4 is already limited.

However, the likely generation of traffic from the proposed use as an office needs to be balanced against the level of traffic that could be generated were the property to remain in residential use. Additionally, no objections have been raised by Engineering Services. Given these comments and the small scale nature of the use and the relatively accessible location of the property it is considered that it would be unreasonable to refuse the proposal on the grounds of highway safety and lack of parking.

Neighbour Amenity

The application property is located directly opposite Swansey Mill. To the east of the property are a number of residential properties that front Preston Road. At the junction of Preston Road and Swansey Lane there are two retail premises. The area is therefore mixed use in character. Policy EM7 states that small scale employment development will be permitted in areas where housing is the principal land use provided there would be no detriment to the amenity of the area in terms of noise, nuisance ,

disturbance, environment and car parking. Given the small scale of the proposed use and the mixed nature of the surrounding uses, it is not considered that the proposal would give rise to an undue loss of amenity for neighbouring residents in terms of noise, nuisance disturbance or environment. Car parking issues are discussed above.

Flood Risk

The application property is located within an area considered to be at high risk from flooding. Office developments are considered to be less flood sensitive than residential properties, therefore there is no objection to the proposal on the grounds of flood risk.

Conclusion

It is considered that, on balance the proposal would not give rise to any undue loss of amenity for neighbouring residents or increased flood risk, or cause any harm to vitality and viability of nearby town centres. Whilst the concerns of the resident regarding parking issues are noted, and the fact that developments providing no off street parking would not normally be allowed, given the advice received from Engineering Services it is not considered that a reason for refusal could be sustained on these grounds. The proposal is accordingly recommended for approval.

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.
