

APPLICATION REPORT – 17/01010/COU

Validation Date: 25 October 2017

Ward: Chorley North West

Type of Application: Change of Use Planning

Proposal: Change of use from offices to 14 room House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Location: Birchall Blackburn With Berry And Son Solicitors 24 St Thomas's Road Chorley PR7 1HR

Case Officer: Mr Iain Crossland

Applicant: Mr Oliver Kaminki

Agent: Bob Margerison

Consultation expiry: 27 December 2017

Decision due by: 19 January 2018

RECOMMENDATION

1. It is recommended that this application is approved subject to conditions.

SITE DESCRIPTION

2. The application site is vacant solicitors office located close to Chorley Town Centre and within the core settlement area. The unit is located on a main highway and is a building of traditional character resembling a Victorian villa. It has been extended significantly over time. There are three off street car parking spaces to the rear of the property accessed from Springfield Road.
3. The area is characterised by Victorian villas that are in a variety of commercial and office uses, with residential properties along the streets radiating from the main road. The building has been vacant for some time and been marketed for sale approximately 9 months. The previous occupiers now occupy a town centre unit.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4. The proposed development involves the change of use from Offices to a 14 room House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). No external physical alterations are proposed, other than alterations to windows in the west side elevation.

REPRESENTATIONS

5. Letters of objection have been received from 5 addresses relating to concerns over local parking availability.
6. A petition signed by 10 individuals has been received, several of whom have also written separately in objection. This raises the following issues:

- Parking availability
- Housing standards
- Anti-social behaviour
- Crime

CONSULTATIONS

7. Lancashire Highway Services: LCC Highways does not have any objections regarding the proposed change of use and are of the opinion that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development

8. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.
9. The Central Lancashire Core Strategy focuses growth in Key Service Centres such as Chorley town, where the application site is located.
10. The site is not allocated for any specific use within the Chorley Local Plan 2012 - 2026 and the Local Plan states that within the settlement areas excluded from the Green Belt, and identified on the Policies Map, there is a presumption in favour of appropriate sustainable development.
11. The application building is currently vacant and has been for some time. It was previously a solicitors office frequented by visiting members of the public, which falls within the A2 use class encompassing financial and professional services. There are no policy designations covering the site and, therefore, the principle of the proposed development on the site is acceptable, subject to other material planning considerations.

Impact on neighbour amenity

12. The proposed residential use would introduce habitable room windows to the building. These would largely face commercial premises, and would not, therefore, result in any loss of residential privacy. It is noted that a window in the rear elevation would face the yard area to no.1 Springfield Road, although this is slightly offset and is at a distance of approximately 10m, which complies with the Council's interface standards.
13. A residential use is a highly compatible use in the context of adjoining residential uses and would not have any undue impact through noise and disturbance.

Impact on character and appearance of the locality

14. There would be no external physical alterations to the building other than alterations to two window openings in the west side elevation, which would have little impact on the appearance of the property. The way in which the property would be used would have little impact on the character of the area, given the extent of existing residential properties in the vicinity.

Highway safety

15. There would be only limited off street car parking provided as part of the application (three spaces), and an area of the yard to the side would be designated for secure cycle storage. The flats would be located close to a comprehensive range of amenities available within a short walk at Chorley town centre. There is also excellent access to the public transport facilities serving the town centre. The application site is, therefore, considered to be highly sustainable and accessible, and, therefore, the provision of parking to serve the flats is not considered essential in this instance.

16. Furthermore, it is noted that the application property was previously used as a solicitors office, requiring 13 off street parking spaces based on the Council's adopted parking standards. There are no parking standards set for HMO's, however, even if the dwellinghouse standards were applied only 14 spaces would be required, which is similar to the current requirement for the offices. In this sense the impact on car parking in the local area would be similar to that generated by the previous use, which this proposal would replace. It is, therefore, considered that there would be no harm to parking capacity in the area as a result of the proposed development.
17. The location is considered to be highly sustainable, such 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. In addition it is noted that LCC Highways have no objection and consider that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on highway safety, capacity or amenity in the immediate vicinity of the site.
18. Given the sustainability credentials of the location and the parking demand already generated by the existing use, the under provision of off street parking is considered acceptable in this instance.

Other matters

19. Impact on the local residents through crime and antisocial behaviour: There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed HMO would result in any impact on crime and antisocial behaviour level in the area. The proposed development would in fact introduce a greater level of natural surveillance in the evenings, which would be of benefit in this respect.
20. Housing standards: Chorley Council's Environmental Health Officer has considered the plans in relation to the Council's HMO Standards and from the perspective of the future tenants of the rooms, and are considered to meet the standards required. The Council's Environmental Health Officer would also visit the premises prior to the first occupation of any of the dwellings.

CONCLUSION

21. There would be no unacceptable detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or the appearance and character of the area as a result of the proposed development. In addition the development is located in a sustainable location and would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety. On the basis of the above, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

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: 5/1/00408 **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 8 May 1952
Description: Alterations and extensions.

Ref: 92/00808/FUL **Decision:** PERFPP **Decision Date:** 9 March 1993
Description: Conversion of former stable outbuilding into 3 offices

Suggested Conditions

No.	Condition
1.	The proposed development must be begun not later than three years from the date

	<p>of this permission. <i>Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</i></p>									
2.	<p>The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Title</th> <th>Drawing Reference</th> <th>Received date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Location plan and site plan</td> <td>17/031/L01</td> <td>15 October 2017</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Proposed plans and elevations</td> <td>17/031/SK02 Rev.A</td> <td>23 November 2017</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning</i></p>	Title	Drawing Reference	Received date	Location plan and site plan	17/031/L01	15 October 2017	Proposed plans and elevations	17/031/SK02 Rev.A	23 November 2017
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3.	<p>No development shall commence until details of secured cycle storage have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall accord with the current Chorley Council Parking standard and include a secure covered facility. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the first occupation/use of the development. The facilities shall be retained at all times thereafter. <i>Reason: To encourage sustainable transport modes.</i></p>									
4.	<p>The communal car parking and manoeuvring areas shall be marked out in accordance with the approved plan and made available prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved. The parking spaces shall be permanently retained thereafter for communal use only and no spaces shall be reserved for individuals. <i>Reasons: To allow for the effective use of the parking areas.</i></p>									