

A01

F/TH/20/1369

PROPOSAL: Change of use from single dwelling to a house in multiple occupation for up to 4 people (Use Class C4).

LOCATION: 21 Belmont Road RAMSGATE Kent CT11 7QG

WARD: Central Harbour

AGENT: Mr John Elvidge

APPLICANT: Mr Chris Yates

RECOMMENDATION: Approve

Subject to the following conditions:

1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

GROUND:

In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Purchase Act 2004).

2 The proposed development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted application as amended by the revised drawings numbered 20/476/JG/PL01 REV A received 04 December 2020.

GROUND;

To secure the proper development of the area.

3 No more than four persons shall occupy the property as principal or main residence at any one time.

GROUND:

In the interests of neighbouring amenity, in accordance with Policy HO19 of the Thanet Local Plan.

4 Prior to the first occupation of the development, the secure cycle parking facilities, as shown on approved drawing no. 20/476/JG/PL01 REV A received 04 December 2020. shall be provided and thereafter maintained.

GROUND:

To promote cycling as an alternative form of transport, in accordance with Policy TP03 and SP43 of the Thanet Local Plan.

SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a two storey mid-terrace dwelling located towards the centre of Belmont Road. The property has a bay window to the ground floor front elevation and a small front garden enclosed by a rendered wall and railings.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is no planning history for the site.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is the change of use from 3 bed dwelling to 4 bed House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO). The application has been amended twice during the process, initially to reduce the maximum number of proposed occupants from six to five and subsequently to remove the subdivision of the first floor bedrooms and reduce the number of occupants again from five to four.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

HO19 - House in Multiple Occupation

QD02 - General Design Principles

QD03 - Living Conditions

TP02 - Walking

TP03 - Cycling

TP06 - Car Parking

NOTIFICATIONS

Letters were sent to neighbouring property occupiers and a site notice was posted close to the site.

Eight letters of objection have been received raising the following concerns:

- Conflict with local plan
- Overdevelopment
- Inadequate access
- Inadequate parking provision
- Loss of parking
- Highway safety
- Location of the cycle storage
- Size of the proposed HMO
- Accessibility of the property (Disability and mobility issues)
- Bin storage
- Other HMOs in the area
- Quality of accommodation

- Impact upon ecology
- Increase in pollution
- Increase in traffic
- Noise nuisance
- Strain on existing community facilities
- Damage to neighbouring properties
- Impact on public health

Ramsgate Town Council - No comment

CONSULTATIONS

TDC Housing - 1. The Thanet District Council Amenity Guidelines suggest that 11 sq m is needed for any double person room, where there is a living room (shared or private) available and 7 sq m for any single person room. On that basis we might think that 6 persons is max, but:

2. The above potential for 6 is irrelevant as we expect to see one shared kitchen per five persons. On that basis 5 persons would be the maximum permitted.

As such, I would not want to see this HMO occupied by more than 5 persons, 5 households in its proposed configuration.

I am not aware of any licensed HMOs within 100m of the property. I have no information as to whether there are any smaller HMOs with shared accommodation (up to 4 persons) in the vicinity. As smaller HMOs are not licensable, we have no records as to their whereabouts.

COMMENTS

This application has been brought to committee by Cllr Albon for members to consider the impact of the proposed use and development upon the area and the living conditions of the neighbouring property occupiers.

Principle

The site is located within the urban confines of Ramsgate and comprises an existing residential dwelling.

Policy HO19 states that proposals for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's), either through conversion of existing buildings or new built development, will not be permitted in those parts of the Cliftonville and Margate Central Wards as illustrated on the policies map.

Elsewhere proposals will be permitted where the development:

- 1) Does not give rise to an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents through noise or general disturbance;
- 2) Does not result in an intensification or concentration of such uses which is detrimental to the amenity and character of the neighbourhood (having regard to the criteria set out in para 11.34 by way of guidance)

- 3) Provides suitable arrangements for car parking, or adequate on-street parking is available within the vicinity of the site and
- 4) Provides suitable arrangements for the storage and collection of waste

The Council's Housing Officer has confirmed that there are no licensed HMOs within 100m of the property and there is no planning history to indicate that there are any smaller HMOs within close proximity to the site including number 36 Belmont Road which has been mentioned in the comments on the application.

The principle of development is therefore considered acceptable subject to all other material considerations.

Character and Appearance

The site is located in a predominantly residential area and is currently in use as a single dwelling. The proposed change of use makes no changes to the external appearance of the property. A bike store would be erected in the rear garden for the storage of five bikes.

The amended plan has removed the subdivision of the first floor bedrooms from the proposal resulting in a development that would accommodate up to four unrelated adults. The existing property benefits from three bedrooms and the remaining existing rooms could be converted to bedrooms without the benefit of planning permission. The amended plan for use by four adults is therefore not considered to result in a significant change in character when compared to the existing property.

Refuse storage would be located within the small front garden similar to the existing arrangement. Whilst the proposed residents are unrelated, it is not considered that four unrelated adults would generate a significant increase in refuse above that of the existing dwelling.

Given that there are no external changes, the location of the proposed bike store and the amended number of proposed residents, it is considered that the proposed development would have no significant impact upon the character and appearance of the area, in line with policies HO19 and QD02 of the Thanet Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Living Conditions

The proposed change of use makes no alterations to the scale of the property or the number of openings. Therefore it is considered that this development would not result in any significant change in loss of light, overlooking or sense of enclosure to the neighbouring properties.

Whilst the proposed HMO would accommodate up to 4 unrelated people, there is no reason to assume that the occupants would cause more noise and disturbance than people living in the property as a single household.

The amended plan has removed the first floor internal alterations leaving the subdivision of the dining room and lounge as the only proposed internal alteration. This internal alteration could be completed without the benefit of planning permission and is likely to a similar arrangement to the original layout of the property. The four bedrooms proposed on the amended plan would all receive natural light and outlook and be of an acceptable size. The basement receives some natural light through a lightwell at the front of the property and there is an amenity area at the rear that would be accessible for all residents. The proposed lounge and kitchen/dining room are limited in size and the kitchen/dining room is located in the basement, however, given the reduced number of residents and the size of the bedrooms proposed on the amended plan, the amended proposal is considered to provide an acceptable standard of accommodation.

The Council's Housing Licensing Officer has raised no objection to the amended proposal and in light of the above it is considered that the amended application would not result in any significant harm to the living conditions of the neighbouring property occupiers and would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for the future occupants, in line with policies HO19 and QD03 of the Thanet Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Transportation

The existing property does not benefit from off street parking currently, and this change of use does not propose any. The proposal will increase the number of bedrooms by one, but would accommodate no more than 4 persons, similar to the existing layout; 1 double bedroom and 2 single bedrooms. The proposed scheme also includes the provision of cycle storage for five cycles in the rear garden. Whilst there is no external access to the rear garden, this arrangement would be similar to the existing dwelling. The site is located in a sustainable location, close to local facilities and public transport links, therefore it is considered that the amended plan would not result in a significant increase in demand for on street parking to result in severe harm to either parking amenity or highway safety.

Financial Contributions

Natural England has previously advised that the level of population increase predicted in Thanet should be considered likely to have a significant effect on the interest features for which the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR have been identified.

Thanet District Council produced the 'The Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Plan (SAMM)' to deal with these matters, which focuses on the impacts of recreational activities on the Thanet section of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area (SPA). The studies indicate that recreational disturbance is a potential cause of the decline in bird numbers in the SPA. To enable the Council to be satisfied that proposed residential development will avoid a likely significant effect on the designated sites (due to an increase in recreation) a financial contribution is required for all housing developments to contribute to the district wide mitigation strategy. This mitigation has meant that the Council accords with the Habitat Regulations.

Whilst the proposed HMO increases the number of bedrooms in the property from three to five, the HMO would be restricted to a maximum of five residents at any one time. Furthermore the lounge and dining room could be converted to bedrooms without the need for planning permission if the property was to remain as a single dwelling. It is therefore considered that given the size and number of bedrooms within the existing property, the permitted development fallback position, and the restriction of 4 residents within the HMO, that there would not be a significant increase in the number of people accommodated by the dwelling. A contribution to mitigate against increased recreational pressure upon the special protection area has therefore not been requested in this instance.

Other Matters

Damage to neighbouring properties either during development or by residents is a civil matter and does not form a material planning consideration.

Given the limited changes to the property the amended development is not considered to result in any significant impact upon ecology and biodiversity in the area or increase in pollution.

The amended proposal for the use of the property by four people is not considered to result in any significant increase in strain on community facilities in the area above that of the existing property.

The amended plan has reduced the alterations to the property and therefore it is considered that there is no significant change in accessibility.

Following the amended plans reducing the number of residents the proposed development is not considered to result in any significant increase in risk to public health above that of the existing property.

Conclusion

Policy HO19 permits HMO's, through conversion of existing buildings in this location, the principle of development is acceptable. The application has been amended, during its determination to reduce the number of residents from 6 to 4 due to concerns raised by the Council's Housing Officer and the standard of accommodation that was proposed. Following the submission of the amended plan reducing the number of residents and bedrooms within the property it is considered that the development would have no significant impact upon the character and appearance of the area, the living amenity of the neighbouring property occupiers or highway safety and would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for the future occupiers.

Case Officer
Duncan Fitt

TITLE:

F/TH/20/1369

Project

21 Belmont Road RAMSGATE Kent CT11 7QG

