

D05

F/TH/19/0874

PROPOSAL: Change of use from store room to studio flat

LOCATION: St Helens Poplar Road BROADSTAIRS Kent CT10 2SJ

WARD: St Peters

AGENT: No agent

APPLICANT: Mr Neville Watts

RECOMMENDATION: Defer & Delegate

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 development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted drawings numbered 546-PP-05 and 546-PP-06 received 26 September 2019.

GROUND:

To secure the proper development of the area.

SITE, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

St Helens is a four storey block of flats accessed from the eastern end of Poplar Road and forms part of a development with two other similar blocks of flats.

The application site is comprised of the storeroom located at the southern end of the block adjacent to the central car parking area. The store room is currently accessed through a door in the rear elevation of the property.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

R/TH/00/1002 - Details pursuant to outline planning consent reference OL/TH/97/0836 for the erection of 30 flats and provision of associated parking facilities in respect to siting, design, external appearance, means of access and landscaping.

OL/TH/97/0836 - Erection of 30 flats and provision of associated parking facilities.

OL/TH/92/0485 - Renewal of outline consent for the erection of 30 flats and provision of associated parking facilities

TH/87/0096 - Outline application for the erection of flats.

TH/83/0605 - Erection of 30 flats and provision of associated parking facilities and access road.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is the change of use of the storeroom to a studio flat. The existing internal door at the rear of the storeroom would be removed and a new access would be created from the communal corridor at the front of the property. Two windows with light wells would be installed in the front elevation and one window in the southern side elevation. A small vent would be installed be required in the side elevation for a new boiler and the existing access to the rear for the cleaners cupboard and meters would be retained.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

Thanet Local Plan 2006 (Saved Policies)

D1 - Design Principles

D2 - Landscaping

H1 - Residential Development Sites

H4 - Windfall Sites

TR12 - Cycling

TR16 - Car parking provision

NOTIFICATIONS

Letters were sent to the neighbouring property occupiers and a site notice was posted close to the site. Six letters of objection have been received raising the following concerns:

- Loss of the hedge
- Parking in front of the window
- Wooden floors used in flat above creating noise and disturbance
- Noise and disturbance from construction
- Impact upon the character and appearance of the area
- Loss of the storage space
- Location of the flue
- Access to the gas metres and cleaners cupboard
- Car parking

Broadstairs and St Peter's Town Council - No objection with the following concerns: Location of the flue and is the store room suitable for conversion to habitable accommodation.

CONSULTATIONS

None received.

COMMENTS

This application is brought before members at the request of Cllr Jason Savage to allow Members to consider the impact of the development upon the character and appearance of the area and the impact upon parking.

Principle

The application site is located within a residential area of Broadstairs and comprises a storeroom for an existing block of flats. The site forms previously developed land and therefore the principle of the change of use to a single dwelling is considered acceptable subject to all other material considerations.

Character and Appearance

Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF states decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, sympathetic to local character and history, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, and optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. Saved policy D1 of the Local Plan outlines that the design of all new proposals must respect or enhance the character and appearance of the area, particularly in scale, massing, rhythm and use of materials.

Two windows would be installed in the front elevation of the building and one window in the southern side elevation close to the front elevation to facilitate the change of use of the storeroom. The flat would be accessed by a new door created within the existing communal entrance.

The windows within the front elevation would follow the patterns and design of the windows in the floors above. The window in the side elevation would be located close to the ground level and the front elevation of the building. Whilst this window would not follow the pattern of windows in this elevation, due to its low level it is not considered to be a prominent or highly incongruous feature that would warrant refusal of the application.

The existing hedge at the front of the property would be removed to allow for the installation of the windows and light wells. Whilst the loss of the hedge is regrettable this could be removed at any time without the need for a formal grant of planning permission and is not considered to result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Concern has been raised regarding the impact of a new flue in the side elevation of the property to serve the boiler for the new flat. There are a number of vents, satellite dishes and other ancillary development on this side elevation. Given the existing features on this side elevation the installation of a flue is not considered to create a highly prominent or visible feature.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development would have no significant impact upon the character and appearance of the area, in line with policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Living Conditions

Paragraph 117 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Saved policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan outlines that new development should be compatible with neighbouring buildings and spaces, should not lead to unacceptable loss of amenity through overlooking, noise or vibration, light pollution, overshadowing, loss of natural light, or sense of enclosure, and should incorporate measures to prevent crime and disorder. Given the nature of the development, there is not considered to be any harm to the amenity or living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, other than visual harm.

The proposed development makes no changes to the external scale of the building. The proposed windows are located in the ground floor and would face across the existing parking areas. One door is proposed in the existing internal corridor to access the flat. Due to the location and limited extent of the external alterations they are not considered to result in any significant overlooking, loss of light or sense of enclosure to the neighbouring properties.

The proposed studio flat would exceed the space required by the Council's Flat Conversion Guidelines and the three proposed windows would provide light and ventilation to the dwelling. The future occupiers would benefit from the existing amenity space at the rear of the property. It is therefore considered that the proposed dwelling would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for the future occupiers.

Concern has been raised regarding the potential for noise and disturbance from the flat above due to the flooring that has been installed. The proposed flat would need to be insulated in accordance with building regulations and the planning system cannot control flooring that is installed within properties. It is therefore considered that the potential for noise and disturbance from the flat above is not significantly harmful enough to warrant refusal of the application.

Noise and disturbance from construction is considered to be temporary in nature and covered by other legislation that falls outside of the planning process.

The proposed development is therefore considered to have no significant impact upon the living conditions of the neighbouring property occupiers and would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for the future occupiers. The proposed development would therefore comply with policy D1 of the Thanet Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Transportation

The site is located within a sustainable location close to the facilities in St Peter's and regular bus routes on Albion Road. The applicant has provided confirmation that they currently own

one of the existing spaces within the development and this would be made available for use by the occupiers of the proposed flat. The proposed development is therefore not considered to result in any significant increase in demand for parking or harm to 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.

The applicant has agreed to submit a unilateral undertaking securing the required financial contribution to mitigate the additional recreational pressure on the SPA area. Therefore subject to the submission of a completed and signed unilateral agreement, the impact upon the SPA is considered to be acceptable.

Other Matters

Access to the metres and cleaners cupboard would be maintained through the existing door at the rear of the building.

Concern has been raised regarding the loss of the existing storeroom. From the information submitted with the application the storeroom is in private ownership and there is no requirement through the planning process for this to be made available for use by other residents. Whilst the loss of a storage area would be regrettable, any rights of access to this area would be a civil matter.

Conclusion

The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply. In the absence of a five year housing land supply paragraph 11 of the Framework is triggered and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This requires planning permission to be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole.

Whilst the provision of one studio flat is considered to be a modest contribution to the districts housing supply it would still represent an additional dwelling in a sustainable location. The development is not considered to result in any significant harm to the character and appearance of the area or the living conditions of the neighbouring property occupiers

and would provide an acceptable standard of accommodation for the future occupiers. Therefore any adverse impacts of the development are not considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the Thanet Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Case Officer

Duncan Fitt

TITLE: F/TH/19/0874

Project St Helens Poplar Road BROADSTAIRS Kent CT10 2SJ

Scale:

