

Application No: 12/4715N
Location: 259, Nantwich Road, CREWE, Crewe, CW2 6NX
Proposal: Change of use from Business to Two Houses of Multiple Occupation
Applicant: M,C and S Dodd and Stewart
Expiry Date: 14-Feb-2013

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to conditions

Main issues:

- Principle of development
- The impact of the design
- The impact upon amenity
- The impact upon highway safety and parking

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application would normally be dealt with under delegated powers however Councillor Dorothy Flude has called the application in to Southern Planning committee for the following reasons;

- 1, No extra waste storage, the provision for extra black and silver bins has not been included in the application there will be 14 residents.
- 2, There is provision for 7 car parking spaces in the application for 14 residents.

The access to the rear of the two semi detached properties to be changed from office use to residential use for 14 beds, is through Alley gates the area is very congested the provision of extra bin storage is vital, as is the consideration of parking spaces at the properties.

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT

The application property is a detached building of three-stories comprising a pair former semi-detached dwellings. The building was constructed in the late 19th Century and is sited on the north side of Nantwich Road, Crewe. The site is situated within the Crewe town settlement boundary. The building is currently vacant and its last use was offices by Cheshire East Borough Council, previously Cheshire County Council. The building was previously used as a children's home by the Cheshire County Council.

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for the change the use of the unit from a business use (B1) to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), consisting of 14 bedrooms (some with ensuite facilities). There are no external alterations proposed to the building.

RELEVANT HISTORY

P02/0944 - New Access Ramp and Entrance Door (County Consultation) – approve with conditions 23rd September 2002

7/10740 - Intermediate training centre – Approved with conditions 17th February 1984

7/03806 - COU from residential to children's home with additions – Approved 17th May 1978

POLICIES

National policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Local Plan Policy

BE.1 - Amenity

BE.2 - Design Standards

BE.3 - Access and Parking

RES.9 – Houses in Multiple Occupation

TRAN9 – Car parking standards

CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)

Strategic Highways Manager –

Seven spaces are proposed, four for No. 261 and 3 for No. 259 which will have 8 and 6 bedrooms respectively.

It is considered this provision to be acceptable given the probable mix of tenants and the site's proximity to facilities. The building previously had no parking within its curtilage.

Access to the spaces is rather cramped and it would be advisable to remove most if not all of the rear wall, i.e. Not just that fronting the parking spaces. This will be necessary to ensure bins can be placed conveniently near (but not on) the rear access lane for collection without obstruction by vehicles parked in the adjacent spaces.

Covered and secure parking for cycles should be provided, separately for the two buildings, on the basis of one space per bedroom.

Subject to the above being indicated or conditioned no objection to the proposal.

Environmental Health – No objections

VIEWS OF THE PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL - N/A

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

3 neighbouring properties have objected to the proposal. The relevant main areas of concern relate to;

- Highway safety / parking issues
- Consider the building should be used as two family dwellings
- Unnecessary noise levels and disturbance created by students
- Increased use of the alley gates would mean they are more likely to break
- Work has already commenced on site and the rooms have been advertised for rental

APPLICANT'S SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Design and Access Statement

Addendum to the Design and Access Statement including a letter from Homeworld Property Management

Email from the applicant

Email from the agent

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principal of Development

The application site is located within the Crewe settlement boundary where there is a general presumption in favour of development. RES.9 of the Local Plan refers to houses in multiple occupation. Policy RES.9 advises that planning permission will be granted provided that;

- the building to be converted is large enough to provide satisfactory living accommodation for future residents without the need to construct extensions which would conflict with Policies BE.1 and BE.2;
- the proposal would not result in an adverse change to the external appearance of the building which would be unacceptable in terms of design or materials used;
- the development does not detract significantly from neighbouring amenities and;
- provision is made for adequate parking.

As such, the determination of the proposal depends on the adherence with these requirements.

Building is large enough for conversion and would not require extensions

The building in question is a three-storey, detached unit which has a floor space of approximately 600 metres squared. It is proposed to convert this property into an 14 bedroom unit, some units will have en-suite and shared kitchen and living room facilities. The smallest of these rooms would be approximately 10.6metres squared and the largest would be approximately 22.25 metres squared. The Housing team have provided a spacing standards document previously which details recommended minimum room size standards. This

document states that the minimum size of a one-bed room deemed to be acceptable is 10 metres squared, a standard which the smallest of the proposed rooms would adhere to.

A communal kitchen would be provided in each side of the building and the development would also include a lounge room, utility room and a communal bathroom on each side.

It is considered that the building is large enough to accommodate the proposal without the need for extensions. No extensions are proposed as part of the development.

Design

There are no external alterations proposed to the building only works to the rear of the building to create a parking area. The building was clearly a residential property previously and very little internal works are required to alter the building into a house of multiple occupation. Given this limited level of development the proposed external changes are deemed to be acceptable.

Amenity

As the building is already in situ, there are no additional issues created with regards to loss of light or visual intrusion.

With regards to loss of privacy, the building is surrounded by residential dwellings. Both of the large dwellings to each side of the development site appear to be in residential use currently, as are the dwellings behind. In front of the property is the entrance to Salisbury Avenue. Whilst it is acknowledged that in recent years the building has been occupied as an office, it is clear from the site history that the building was used as a children's home and prior to that was in residential use. Furthermore, the existing floor plans show that the first and second floor of the building are still presented as bedrooms and it is therefore considered that the use of the building for residential will not have a significantly increase impact on loss of privacy.

In terms of private amenity space, No.261 will have approximately 80m² (not including the area to the front) and No.259 will have approximately 50m² (not including the area to the front) which is designated as an amenity space. Although this is not significant, given that the development is for a house in multiple occupation and is within close proximity of the town centre and all of its associated public space it is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

Within the objections raised issues have been made with reference to the potential noise from student occupiers. Whilst noise is a material planning consideration perceived possible noise is not. The Environmental Health department have raised no objection to the proposal, and should noise become an issue this would be covered by either Environmental Health legislation or the Police.

As a result, it is considered that the development is acceptable.

Parking and Highway Safety

The impact upon parking and highway safety is the main concern of local residents. The proposed development would include a car park to accommodate 7 cars. The site plan also shows an area of covered cycle storage for No.261.

The site is situated on Nantwich road which represents a sustainable location for such development, near to local bus routes and walking distance to the town and university. In these locations, parking standards can be relaxed as other forms of transport are readily available to occupiers.

The Strategic Highways Manager notes that parking is to be obtained from the rear access road. Where seven spaces are proposed, four for No. 261 and 3 for No. 259 which will have 8 and 6 bedrooms respectively. It is considered that this provision is acceptable given the probable mix of tenants and the site's proximity to facilities. Furthermore, the building was previously in use as an office which had no parking provision associated with the building.

The Strategic Highways officer notes that access to the spaces is rather cramped and it would be advisable to remove most if not all of the rear wall as this will be necessary to ensure bins can be placed conveniently near (but not on) the rear access lane for collection without obstruction by vehicles parked in the adjacent spaces. Covered and secure parking for cycles should be provided, separately for the two buildings, on the basis of one space per bedroom.

It is therefore considered that with a condition for an amended car parking layout to remove all or most of the existing rear wall, also showing bin storage area and secure cycle storage for both properties the proposal is acceptable and is considered that the proposal will not have a significantly detrimental impact on highway safety.

National Planning Policy Framework

Amongst the core principles of the NPPF is that planning should proactively support sustainable economic development, be of good design, provide a good standard of amenity and support the transition to a low carbon future.

Given that it is considered that this application sufficiently demonstrates that the above assessments have been made, it is deemed that the NPPF falls in line with the relevant Local Plan policies in this instance.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The proposed change of use is located within the Crewe settlement boundary and would only involve a minor external alteration to the unit. It would not have an adverse impact upon neighbouring amenity or raise any significant highway/parking issues. The proposal therefore complies with Policies BE.1 (Amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards), BE.3 (Access and Parking) and RES.9 (Houses in Multiple Occupation) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011. The development also complies with the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions

1. **Standard (Time)**
2. **Plans**
3. **Materials as per application**
4. **Amended Parking plan**
5. **Bin storage details for both properties**
6. **Secured bicycle storage details for both properties**
7. **Boundary Treatment**

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