

Application No: 24/2326N

Location: First Friends Pre School Vincent Street, Crewe, CW1 4AA

Proposal: Proposed Change of Use from former Church Hall/Childrens Pre school to House in Multiple Occupation C4.

Applicant: Mrs Karishma Davdra Skope Property Investments

Expiry Date: 28-Aug-2024

SUMMARY

The site is within the Crewe settlement boundary, where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The main issue therefore is whether there are any other material considerations such as design, amenity, highway safety, living conditions etc that outweigh the in-principle support for the proposal.

During the application process revised plans have been submitted which reduced the number of bedrooms from 12 to 10 with a communal kitchen/dinning area, separate utility and WC, and an additional study/lounge area. All bedrooms meet the HMO requirements for internal space for 1 bedrooms of 10.21sqm, with all also exceeding the 2 bed internal space. Each bedroom has an ensuite shower room. The building also meets the NDSS requirements for dwellings.

The proposed change of use will have little impact on the appearance of the existing building, retaining the existing façade and only replacing the windows and therefore the change of use will have a neutral impact on the streetscene.

The proposal would provide positive benefits such as the economic sustainability roles by providing employment in the locality during conversion works and social role by providing housing in a sustainable location. The retention and re-use of the building is also a positive benefit of the scheme.

There is sufficient indoor and outdoor space provided for the future occupants to meet the requirements of the SPD and local plan policies. The site is located in a sustainable location with good links to public transport hubs.

Although there is no off-street parking proposed with the scheme, the Highways officer states that, further technical information has been submitted on the available on-street parking in the vicinity of the site and also on the likely car ownership by HMO tenants. The results of the PM parking survey showed that there are available spaces on local roads in the vicinity of the site. Whilst these are not all on Vincent Street there are a number of spaces available close to the site within easy walking distance. The car ownership information submitted indicated that only 14% of tenants had cars, these figures may be considered optimistic but does show that not all tenants will own a car. Therefore, it is considered that given the sustainable location of the site, the parking and ownership data and the proposed secure cycle storage the scheme is acceptable in terms of highway safety.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable and therefore recommended for approval accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve with conditions

DEFERRAL

This application was deferred from the 4th December 2024 Southern Planning Committee meeting, for the following reasons;

- Further information in terms of the waste storage requirements and details of waste management.
- Details of how the communal areas of the building would be managed.
- Information on the number of parking spaces available in the evening in the locality of the site (including Vincent Street).

This update report will address each reason for deferral below, and the actions taken to address the issues raised.

Further information in terms of the waste storage requirements and details of waste management.

ANSA have confirmed that a HMO of 10 bedrooms would be treated as one residence and they would have a requirement for 3 standard sizes (240's) bins of each type (3 waste / 3 recycle) or 2 larger sized (360's) bins of each type (2 waste / 2 recycle) residential bins.

The Housing Team have confirmed that the control of refuse in HMO's is part of the licence conditions imposed. Although the Housing Team do not stipulate how many bins are required or if they use ANSA or a private company who could clear the rubbish, if the amount provided is insufficient, the Housing Team can issue a financial penalty as part of the breach of licence condition.

The applicant has submitted a revised plan to show that the bin store to the rear of the site can accommodate 5 standard black waste bins, 5 standard recycle bins and a garden waste bin. This is therefore sufficient for the proposed use of the site.

Details of how the communal areas of the building would be managed.

The applicant has confirmed that the property will be run by a management company, like other properties the applicants own of this type. The management company will be responsible for the ground and general building maintenance and will be responsible for ensuring the bins are available for collection and returned to the bin storage area.

Information on the number of parking spaces available in the evening in the locality of the site (including Vincent Street).

The applicants has submitted a revised plan to show 4 parking spaces in front of the building. However, the use of these parking spaces couldn't be guaranteed as they are within the Highway.

The applicant has stated that the spaces highlighted in the original submission nearby were sufficient to address the likely need for parking in association with the proposed HMO, given the average car ownership levels of similar HMO's in the area being only 14%. The parking study previously submitted showed that in the PM there

were available spaces on local roads in the vicinity of the site. They are not all on Vincent Street but within easy walking distance.

As set out previously the site is located within a suitable location in walking distance of the town centre bus station and the train station and therefore occupants would not need to solely rely on private vehicles. The development also provides 10 secure cycle spaces within the existing outbuildings.

There is no objection to the scheme from the Highways Authority, in terms of lack of parking subject to a condition for the cycle storage to be implemented as proposed.

Conclusion of update

It is therefore considered that the above addresses the issues raised at the previous committee meeting, and that on balance the recommendations proposed previously are still appropriate.

The officer's recommendation therefore remains for approval with conditions, as proposed below.

Original committee report with updates

REASON FOR REFERRAL

This application is referred to Southern Planning Committee at the request of Cllr Faddes for the following reasons:

I would like to call in this application which I consider to not meet our planning policy on parking standards. I also consider it a poor-quality development which offers minimum amenity facilities for any future residents of the HMO.

Vincent Street is a Victorian terraced road, with no off-street parking. It is inhabited by families who often struggle to park, this has worsened since the Grand Junction Retail park was built and drivers accessing the Retail park use neighbouring roads to park on the street for long periods. Whilst the building was in use as a Pre School parents dropped their children off and the disruption to those living on the street was only at drop off and pick up times.

A HMO would mean twelve extra parking spaces on this heavily occupied road, vehicles which would be parked there whilst the residents were at home so for a much longer time than the pre school parents took up.

The parking policy for planning states that this development would require 12 carparking spaces, these are not possible, with the heavily built up situation of the street.

I note that Highways also object to the application on parking grounds. The developer states that there are strong public transport connections, but the only

bus route accessible from Vincent Street is a five to ten minute walk away and then a twenty to twenty five minute journey to the town centre.

The application is a poor quality development, there are 6 rooms which appear to measure 12' x 9' (7,8,9,10,11) rooms 5 and 6 appear to be 9' -10' square, whilst rooms 1-4 are slightly larger. I note there are no measurements of the rooms on the plans. This rooms are extremely small and would not offer a decent home environment for the residents.

Whilst there are external doors to the two stores, one external door to the kitchen next to room 1, room 9 does have an external door and there is a new external door to the front of the building, this does not bare well for safety in the case of evacuation due to a fire. Residents of 1, 2 ,3 and 4 would have to walk past other rooms and into the kitchen before reaching an external door.

Residents from 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 would have to walk a considerable distance to access safety if the door to No9 was locked. This development would breach fire safety regulations.

Bin storage is to the side and residents would be required to take their bins through a narrow alleyway to the footpath at the front. To my mind there is not enough bin storage and as bins from other HMOs on or near the street are left out for a considerable time, would this development add to the problem.

Should we expect residents to life in such poor quality housing. This development offers a minimum standard of living for residents, with worries over safety and the lack of car parking spaces I would very much like this application to be heard by a committee.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use from a former Church Hall/Childrens pre-school to House in Multiple Occupation C4.

Revised plans have been received during the process of the application to reduce the scheme from 12 bedrooms to 10 bedrooms.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on Vincent Street, Crewe. The existing building is a former Church Hall/Children's pre-school building which has been vacant for some time.

The building is located within an established residential area, of largely terraced properties with little or no off-street parking. The site is located in the Settlement Boundary of Crewe as designated within the Local Plan.

RELEVANT HISTORY

No relevant planning history

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (LPS)

MP1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
PG2 Settlement Hierarchy
SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles
SE 1 Design
SE 2 Efficient Use of Land
SE 12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
SC3 Health and Wellbeing
SC4 Residential Mix
EG1 Economic Prosperity
EG3 Existing and Allocated Employment Sites
C01 Sustainable Travel and Transport
C02 Enabling Business Growth through Transport Infrastructure

Appendix C Parking Standards

Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD)

PG8 Development at Local Service Centres
PG9 Settlement Boundaries
GEN 1 Design Principles
ENV 1 Ecological Network
ENV 2 Ecological Implementation
ENV6 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands
ENV 7 Climate change
ENV16 Surface Water Management and Flood Risk
HOU1 Housing Mix
HOU4 Houses in multiple occupation
HOU 8 Space, accessibility and wheelchair housing standards
HOU12 Amenity
HOU13 Residential Standards
HOU16 Small and Medium Sites
INF3 Highways Safety and Access
INF 9 Utilities

Other material considerations

Cheshire East Design Guide SPD
Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document Adopted
September 2021
Housing SPD

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

CONSULTATIONS

Crewe Town Council:

Response received 2nd December 2024 (was given as a verbal update to the committee)

It remains that the planning application proposal is inappropriate in this location as the waste management will result in waste bins on streets, which will affect existing residents. Additionally, the setting is inappropriate for high density and low-quality accommodation, leading to issues with residents. There is no parking, and it is naive to assume the residents won't have cars. Access via the rear is impossible due to the state of the alley. The application is entirely unsuitable in this location.

Original Response 16/7/24 - That the committee objects to the proposals on the following grounds:

- i. Overdevelopment of the site the proposals are a clear representation of over-development of the site providing very low quality and high-density accommodation which is considered unsustainable and socially damaging.
- ii. Loss of amenity for neighbouring residents due to noise and on street waste due to the proposal's high density and low social sustainability approach
- iii. Lack of off-street parking does not meet planning policy and will lead to on street parking issues in an area already over-subscribed for on street parking.
- iv. Lack of environmental sustainability within the proposals, which do not provide for net biodiversity gain, sustainable energy production (solar panels or EV charging, which does not meet planning policy.
- v. The location for this type of development is entirely inappropriate. The area is traditional terraced housing that provides accommodation for families, and it has been demonstrated and sustained in the past that further proliferation of HMO accommodation in Crewe is unsustainable. Article 4 Directives have been established to prevent these unwanted and poor-quality developments that deliver no value to the community but are to the detriment of the community.

CEC Highways: No objections to reduced scheme

CEC Environmental Protection: No objection

LLFA – No objections subject to condition for surface water drainage strategy to be submitted prior to commencement of development

Network Rail – No objections

Cllr J Rhodes: (1) This transformation of a church hall into a 12 bed HMO is not appropriate for the character of the area which is Victorian terraced houses. This is dense housing was not designed for the 21st century and cars. My objection is that there is no parking associated with this development and CEC planning policy is clear that car parking is needed for all developments, appropriate to the number of bedrooms the property contains. This policy has been imposed on past planning

applications. In the case of Edleston School there were 23 carparking spaces, one for each bedroom. It is not appropriate to say residents who live in HMO's don't have a car. Residents who might live here will have cars as they need them to get to work. I feel it would be more appropriate to convert this property into a small number of apartments rather than overdeveloped single spartan bedrooms.

(2) I strongly object to this proposal on the grounds of access, amenity and parking.

Vincent Street comprises mainly of terraced houses with no parking facilities, so residents of this street have to park on street in front of their property. Many families have more than one car, have visitors or find shoppers or staff at the Grand Junction Retail Park occasionally utilise the road for parking purposes while they have popped out to town or a school run. To abide by Cheshire East parking policy which states that this development should have 12 car parking spaces is not possible.

I note that Highways have also accepted this is an issue in Vincent Street and have lodged an objection on parking reasons. I completely agree with the Highways team, to convert a facility which formally only had parents dropping off and collecting pre school children twice a day, into a HMO for 12 people who may all have vehicles would put an unbearable burden onto this already congested, double parked street.

The developer states that there are sustainable alternatives with a bus route nearby, this bus route is a 5-10 minute walk away across Queen Street, which poses danger with the amount of traffic which uses the Grand Junction retail park roundabout. The bus service then takes a 20 - 25 minute journey to access the town centre, with another further bus journey to the Railway Station, Business park, Bentley or Leighton Hospital (the latter three being our main job opportunities for residents).

I would also like to comment on the destruction of the road and inconvenience which this application would cause to the area. HGVs bringing materials and construction equipment and taking spoil on an already crumbling Victorian narrow street. At times there would be utility vehicles, plumbers, electricians, decorators, carpet fitters and broadband connectors who would cause more havoc to the congestion on this road.

Vincent Street is used as a cut through to avoid the Retail Park roundabout and with the "No right turn" markings on Manchester bridge, many are not fully aware of the restrictions here. Many come from Hall O Shaw Street/Surrey Street into Vincent Street to avoid the roundabout though and more on street parking would increase worries over danger.

The access to the properties is concerning to me, there do not appear to be enough external doors and some of the residents would have to walk through the kitchen and past other rooms before accessing their own room. In the case of a fire this would be very dangerous.

The amenity of any future residents is very poor with little more than a box room as their own space, they would not have a decent environment for relaxing, studying or inviting friends over. We should not be allowing developments which leave future residents in such undesirable conditions.

Can you please accept my objections on this application, and I do hope that they are considered along with the many other comments from residents who live nearby and will be directly affected and those who know the area or have relatives here.

REPRESENTATIONS

Approximately 50 letters of objection have been received which raise the following issues:

- Highway impacts/lack of parking
- Bin storage issues
- The roads are not safe for heavy good vehicles
- Will lead to increase in antisocial behaviour
- Overdevelopment on the property
- Impact to quality of life to surrounding properties
- Loss of parking for existing residents
- Noise disturbance
- There is already too many HMOs in the area
- Area to the rear of the site owned by Network rail is not maintained and this would lead to additional rubbish/pests etc
- Local infrastructure such as Doctors, dentists and schools are at capacity
- The rooms are very small and appear to provide a sub-standard level of accommodation for future occupiers
- Private amenity space provided is limited for the potential 12 occupants plus visitors to use
- Lack of renewable energy proposal within the scheme
- More quality family housing is needed to be provided
- No new homes are required in Crewe
- The building should be used for more appropriate use / community use / school
- Impact on water supply, drainage issues in the area
- General concerns raised over the amenity impact of construction period

A list of 98 names and addresses has also been submitted in the form of petition from across the Country, around half in the local area. The petition has no title or clear indication of what material planning considerations are being raised. The covering email states, *'Attached is a Petition with almost 100 signatures. These are mostly local signatures, please take into account the feelings of local people and respect their wishes, reject this proposal. We want to see the hall redeveloped and back in use but these plans are nothing short of offensive.'*

Furthermore, there were also a further 2 letters of objection removed from the planning register due to the offensive nature of the comments.

One letter of support has been received; the issues raised are:

- Re-use of the building is needed, it has attracted some vandalism.
- Affordable housing is needed in Crewe.

OFFICER APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

The site lies in the Crewe settlement boundary as designated in the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan, where there is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy PG2 of the LPS sets out that, in the Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, significant development will be encouraged to support their

revitalisation, recognising their roles as the most important settlements in the borough. Development will maximise the use of existing infrastructure and resources to allow jobs, homes and other facilities to be located close to each other and accessible by public transport. As a result, the proposal is acceptable from a pure land use perspective.

The main issue therefore is whether there are any other material considerations such as design, amenity, highway safety, living conditions etc that outweigh the in-principle support for the proposal.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

The Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (“HMO SPD”) was adopted by the Council on the 9 September 2021 and is a material consideration to be taken into account in the determination of planning applications for HMOs.

While HMOs and the wider private rented sector play an important role in meeting housing needs, a saturation of HMOs in a particular location can have negative impacts upon that area, for example the number of homes available for families or those wanting to purchase their first home may reduce due to a high demand for investment properties. In addition, the occupation of dwellings as HMOs by a higher number of adults compared to a typical family home, can place additional demands on services and infrastructure, for example increased waste generation.

The SPD includes guidance on avoiding or exacerbating concentrations of HMOs in order to support the well-being and amenity of neighbourhoods. This includes a threshold of no more than 10% of dwellings in HMO use within 50m of an application site and the sandwiching test. These tests are also replicated in SADPD Policy HOU 4 ‘Houses in Multiple Occupation’ referred to above.

For the purposes of SADPD Policy HOU 4 Criteria 1(i&ii):

The Council's records show that there are 68 residential addresses within a 50m radius of the application site. Based on current information drawn across planning permission data, building regulations information, licencing information and data provided by the Council's housing team, there are no known HMO's within the 50m buffer zone. There are therefore no known sandwiching issues.

Achieving good standards of accommodation

SADPD Policy HOU 4 sets various criteria against which applications for HMOs should be assessed. The HMO SPD also includes guidance on achieving good standards of accommodation and the dwelling and internal layout must be sufficient to accommodate the proposed number of residents in order to protect the residential amenity of future occupiers of the HMO and any adjacent residents. The external area serving the dwelling should also be of sufficient size to accommodate waste storage requirements, make adequate provision for cycle parking, provide space for outdoor clothes drying and amenity space for residents.

The revised plans have reduced the number of bedrooms from 12 to 10 with a communal kitchen/dinning area, separate utility and WC, and an additional study/lounge area. All bedrooms meet the NDSS / HMO requirements for internal

space for 1 bedrooms, of 10.21sqm, with all also exceeding the 2 bed internal space. Each bedroom has an ensuite shower room.

Waste management

Larger HMOs may have additional waste storage requirements due to the intensified use of the property. The plans indicate that the bins will be located within the rear courtyard area of the building, with access through the existing building. The structure proposed to store the waste appears to be of a suitable size for the proposed use, however a condition will be proposed for full details to be submitted and approved.

Car and cycle parking

For car parking the SPD applies the parking standards as per the local plan which requires 1 space per bedroom (negotiated by site on reduced provision). For cycle parking the SPD recommends 1 space per bedspace.

There is no off-road parking proposed for the property and the area can be quite saturated with on street parking. However, the applicant submitted a parking study which highlighted availability of on street parking in the area and the likely levels of car ownership for an HMO in the area. The results of the PM parking survey showed that there are available spaces on local roads in the vicinity of the site. Whilst these are not all on Vincent Street there are a number of spaces available close to the site within easy walking distance. The car ownership information submitted indicated that only 14% of tenants had cars, these figures may be considered optimistic but does show that not all tenants will own a car. The site is in a very sustainable location on the edge of the town centre, which is on a bus route and within easy walking distance of the Bus Station and Train Station.

Secure covered cycle storage is also shown within the existing storage building at the rear of the site and this can be conditioned.

Outdoor amenity space

The proposed development includes the use of the existing courtyard to the rear of the site to be used as communal outdoor amenity space of around 150 sqm. This should be sufficient space for the future occupants to access outdoor space. Furthermore, the site is located within 200m of Queen Street Park which is a local area of open space and play area.

Highways

As set out above, revised plans have been submitted for this change the use for an HMO consisting of 10 bedrooms. The site is located off Vincent Street, Crewe and does not have any existing off-street parking and this remains the same in this application.

The CEC parking standards for HMO's would require 10 car parking spaces to be provided (negotiated by site on reduced provision). Whilst the previous uses would have had some on-street parking demand this would not have been overnight parking as is required with residential properties. There appears to be some limited

parking space fronting the building but not enough to accommodate the level of development proposed.

The Highways Officer states that, further technical information has been submitted on the available on-street parking in the vicinity of the site and also on the likely car ownership by HMO tenants. The results of the PM parking survey showed that there are available spaces on local roads in the vicinity of the site. Whilst these are not all on Vincent Street there are a number of spaces available close to the site within easy walking distance. The car ownership information submitted indicated that only 14% of tenants had cars, these figures may be considered optimistic but does show that not all tenants will own a car.

The Highways Officer therefore confirms that given the information submitted and the reduction in the number of bedrooms the application is now acceptable and no objections are raised.

It is considered that the proposed cycle storage should be conditioned to ensure it is provided and made available prior to the first occupation of the building.

Design

Policy SE1 advises that development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of the creating a sense of place, managing design quality, sustainable urban, architectural and landscape design, live and workability and designing in safety. The Cheshire East Design Guide Volumes 1 and 2 give more specific design guidance. Policy GEN 1 of the SADPD also reflects this advice.

The proposal includes very little external alterations. All windows and doors (where necessary) will be replaced (many have been vandalised since the building has been empty), but the openings will be retained, and the external façade will remain as it is. These are considered to be limited visual changes with no harm to the overall character/appearance of the area.

The character of the area is predominantly residential so it is not expected that the residential use would harm the character of the area.

The proposal includes the use of the existing outbuildings for cycle storage with a bin storage area proposed within the rear courtyard.

Therefore, it is not considered that the proposal would cause any harm to the character/appearance of the area, and is of a design which is appropriate for its use.

Amenity

With regards to neighbouring amenity, Policy HOU12 advises development proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of adjoining or nearby occupiers of residential properties, sensitive uses, or future occupiers of the proposed development due to: 1. loss of privacy; 2. loss of sunlight and daylight; 3. the overbearing and dominating effect of new buildings; 4. environmental disturbance or pollution; or 5. traffic generation, access and parking.

Policy HOU13 sets standards for spacing between windows of 18m between front elevations, 21m between rear elevations or 14m between habitable to non-habitable

rooms. For differences in land levels it suggests an additional 2.5m for levels exceed 2m.

Surrounding neighbouring properties

The properties most affected by this proposal are Nos.14 and No.26 Vincent Street.

As the building is already in situ it is not considered that the physical mass of the building would pose any further harm to living conditions through overbearing/oppressive impact etc. No new windows are proposed therefore it is not considered that the proposal would result in any increase in privacy/overlooking.

A new boundary fence should be erected along the southern boundary of the site to reduce any overlooking into the rear amenity space and windows of No 14. This can be conditioned as part of the landscaping condition for the rear communal area.

Future occupants

The proposal would provide an area of private open space to the rear of the property measuring approximately 150sqm.

The Councils SPD, does not stipulate a specific size of amenity area for flats/apartments however it advises that where it is not appropriate to provide private open space for each dwelling, it will be necessary to provide communal areas of open space; these should be located so they can be used by all the residents equally.

Policy HOU13 only advises that appropriate quantity and quality of outdoor private amenity space should be provided.

The external area serving the dwelling should also be of sufficient size to accommodate waste storage requirements, make adequate provision for cycle parking, provide space for outdoor clothes drying and amenity space for residents.

As noted above the proposed development includes the use of the existing courtyard to the rear of the site to be used as communal outdoor amenity space of around 150 sqm. This should be sufficient space for the future occupants to access outdoor space. Furthermore, the site is located within 200m of Queen Street Park which is a local area of open space and play area.

Internal living conditions

The plans show that each bedroom would have a window to allow for ventilation and natural light, and the bedrooms meet the required internal size standards. There is communal internal living areas proposed to encourage a communal living environment.

Housing standards

In terms of dwelling sizes, it is noted that HOU8 of the SADPD requires that new housing developments comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS).

The revised plans have reduced the number of bedrooms from 12 to 10 with a communal kitchen/dinning area, separate utility and WC, and an additional study/lounge area. All bedrooms meet the NDSS/HMO requirements for internal space for 1 bedrooms, of 10.21sqm, with all also exceeding the 2 bed internal space. Each bedroom has an ensuite shower room.

The Nationally Described Spacing Standards (NDSS) states that the minimum internal floor areas for a 6 bedroom property over 1 storeys for 8 people (this is the maximum shown in the Table) it requires 125sqm (as per the table below). The property provides 250sqm not including external storage areas.

Table 1 - Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m²)

Number of bedrooms(b)	Number of bed spaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built-in storage
1b	1p	39 (37) *			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3.0
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4.0
	8p	125	132	138	

It is noted that some neighbours have raised concerns regarding noise / disturbance during construction. Given the relatively small-scale development which will be required to convert the building into a HMO the construction permitted will be limited and an informative will be added to any permission which sets out appropriate construction hours. Any significant noise nuisance during construction would be dealt with by Environmental Protection legislation.

It is therefore considered that the proposal meets the required existing and proposed amenity standards.

Nature Conservation

The Councils ecologist has considered the proposals and made the following comments.

Bats

There is a reasonable likelihood that bats will not present a constraint on the proposed works, and therefore a protected species survey is considered to be disproportionate in this instance.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The site falls within the 'de-minimis' exemption for statutory Biodiversity Net Gain. Subsequently the mandatory Biodiversity Gain Condition does not apply to this application.

No ecological constraints or conditions are required in this instance; however, if the applicant wishes to provide a benefit for wildlife, then it is recommended that native planting and insect boxes are installed within the courtyard area.

Other Matters

The majority of comments from representations have been covered above in this report and have been addressed by the revised plans which have reduced the overall development from 12 bedrooms to 10 bedrooms.

The perceived likely increase in antisocial behaviour, this is noted but given the scale of the development at the intended use (residential accommodation in a residential area) it is not considered that this is an issue which would warrant the refusal of the application. There would be benefits in terms of bringing the building back into use, as it is clear that the site is already attracting some anti-social behaviour with issues such as vandalism.

Impact on house value is not a material planning consideration.

Conclusion

The site is within the Crewe settlement boundary, where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The main issue therefore is whether there are any other material considerations such as design, amenity, highway safety, living conditions etc that outweigh the in-principle support for the proposal.

During the application process revised plans have been submitted which reduced the number of bedrooms from 12 to 10 with a communal kitchen/dinning area, separate utility and WC, and an additional study/lounge area. All bedrooms meet the HMO requirements for internal space for 1 bedrooms of 10.21sqm, with all also exceeding the 2 bed internal space. Each bedroom has an ensuite shower room. The building also meets the NDSS requirements for dwellings.

The proposed change of use will have little impact on the appearance of the existing building, retaining the existing façade and only replacing the windows and therefore the change of use will have a neutral impact on the streetscene.

The proposal would provide positive benefits such as the economic sustainability roles by providing employment in the locality during conversion works and social role by providing housing in a sustainable location. The retention and re-use of the building is also a positive benefit of the scheme.

There is sufficient indoor and outdoor space provided for the future occupants to meet the requirements of the SPD and local plan policies. The site is located in a sustainable location with good links to public transport hubs.

Although there is no off-street parking proposed with the scheme, the Highways officer states that, further technical information has been submitted on the available on-street parking in the vicinity of the site and also on the likely car ownership by HMO tenants. The results of the PM parking survey showed that there are available spaces on local roads in the vicinity of the site. Whilst these are not all on Vincent Street there are a number of spaces available close to the site within easy walking distance. The car ownership information submitted indicated that only 14% of tenants had cars, these figures may be considered optimistic but does show that not all tenants will own a car. Therefore, it is considered that given the sustainable location of the site, the parking and ownership data and the proposed secure cycle storage the scheme is acceptable in terms of highway safety.

It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable and therefore recommended for approval accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve with conditions

- 1. Standard Time**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. External Materials to match existing**
- 4. Soft/Hard Landscaping plan**
- 5. Landscaping implementation**
- 6. Boundary Treatment**
- 7. Bin Storage – details and retention**
- 8. Cycle Storage – details and retention**
- 9. Surface water drainage scheme – details to be submitted**

In order to give proper effect to the Committee's intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation), in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) of Southern Planning Committee, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

