

Application No: 13/1708N  
Location: 92- 94, NANTWICH ROAD, CREWE, CW2 6AT  
Proposal: Change of use from office to 6 Bedsit Flats (within the same property)  
Applicant: Dave Easton  
Expiry Date: 15-Jul-2013

**SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE** subject to conditions

**Main issues:**

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

**REASON FOR REFERRAL**

The application was called in by Councillor Dorothy Flude on the following grounds:

*“Concern re plans, fire exits, natural light, bathing, toilet and kitchen facilities.  
Change of use from Office to 6 Bedsits no extra provision for the storage of waste and its collection.*

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site comprises a double fronted office building situated on the southern side of Nantwich Road, Crewe. The site is designated as being within the settlement boundary of Crewe and the Nantwich Road Sopping Area (subject to Policy S.9).

**DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The proposal seeks full planning permission for change of use from office (B1) to 6 bedsit flats (C4). There would be 2 bedsits, a kitchen and a communal area on the ground floor and 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms on the first floor.

**RELEVANT HISTORY**

P00/0409 2000 Change of use to offices

**POLICIES**

**National policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

**Local Plan Policy****RES.9 – Houses in Multiple Occupation**

BE.1 – Amenity

BE.2 - Design Standards

BE.3 - Access and Parking

S.9 – Nantwich Road Shopping Area

**CONSULTATIONS (External to Planning)****Strategic Highways Manager:**

None received at the time of report writing.

**Environmental Health:**

Recommend conditions relating to noise, lighting, bin storage and air quality.

**VIEWS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

The Town Council have expressed concerns about adequate parking provision.

**OTHER REPRESENTATIONS**

None received at the time of report writing.

**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.

Circular 08/2010 – Changes to Planning Regulations for Dwellinghouses in Multiple Occupation, defines houses occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities, as houses of multiple occupation. These fall into Use Class C4. As such the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2013, Part 3, Schedule 2, Class J, that allows for the change of use of offices (B1) to residential dwellings (C3), which came into force on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2013, does not apply.

Nantwich Road is a predominantly shopping/commercial area with some residential units above the commercial premises. Policy S.9 requires uses within this area to be complementary to the existing retail uses and not have a detrimental impact on the retail function or residential amenity of the area. Having regard to this proposal, the existing use is as offices (B1) and as such there would be no loss of retail frontage and it is not considered that it would have a detrimental impact on the overall retail function of the area. The proposal is therefore in compliance with Policy S.9.

Policy RES.9 allows for the conversion of buildings to houses of multiple occupation provided that the building is large enough to provide satisfactory living conditions, without the need for extensions that would conflict with Policies BE.1 and BE.2, the external appearance would be

acceptable, there is no adverse impact on residential amenity and parking can be safely accommodated.

It is considered that the proposal would comply with the requirements of Policy RES.9 and therefore the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle.

Members should note that on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011 the Minister for Decentralisation Greg Clark published a statement entitled 'Planning for Growth'. On 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011 this was supplemented by a statement highlighting a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' which has now been published in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012.

Collectively these statements and the National Planning Policy Framework mark a shift in emphasis of the planning system towards a more positive approach to development. As the minister says:

*"The Government's top priority in reforming the planning system is to promote sustainable economic growth and jobs. Government's clear expectation is that the answer to development and growth should wherever possible be 'yes', except where this would compromise the key sustainable development principles set out in national planning policy"*

### **Design**

There are very minor alterations to the windows in the ground floor front elevation. These would give a more attractive and sympathetic appearance to the building, which would represent an improvement in design terms. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable and in compliance with Policy BE.2 of the adopted local plan.

### **Amenity**

Having regard to future residents of the properties, they would need to have acceptable living conditions and the majority of the issues raised by the Ward Councillor relating to this, are covered by other legislation. However; it was not clear from the drawings that all the bedsits would have access to natural light, from either windows or roof lights. It would however be possible to provide this in the building. Amended drawings have been requested showing that access to natural light is possible and this will be addressed in an update to the report.

Bin storage and collection has also been raised as an issue by the Ward Councillor. The applicants have not submitted details of bin storage at the time of report writing, but there is an accessible yard to the rear of the property, in which this could be accommodated. An amended drawing has therefore been requested to demonstrate that this is possible and this will also be addressed in an update to the report.

### **Parking and Highway Safety**

The Strategic Highways Manager has not commented at the time of report writing. However; there are public car parks in very close proximity to the site, which could be used by the occupiers of the proposed bedsits.

In addition this is considered to be a sustainable location, with easy access to shops, services, buses and trains. As such the proposal is considered to be in compliance with Policy BE.3 (Highways).

**Other matters**

The issue of fire exits, bathing and toilet facilities and kitchen facilities have also been raised by the Ward Councillor in relation to this application. It should be noted that these issues are dealt with under Building Regulations and Housing legislation and not Planning.

**CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

The proposed change of use is located within the Crewe settlement boundary and would involve minor external alteration of the building. 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) and BE.3 (Access and Parking) of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011. The development also complies with the NPPF.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. Time limit
2. Approved plans
3. Submission of drawings showing windows/roof lights to all bedsit rooms
4. Submission of details of bin storage



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