

Application No: 16/4532N

Location: 2, Market Street, Crewe, CW1 2EQ

Proposal: Elevation Alterations and Change of use from Disused Bank to Self Contained A2 Estate Agency and Large House of Multiple Occupation for 7 persons

Applicant: Evans

Expiry Date: 10-Nov-2016

SUMMARY:

The site is within Crewe Town Centre and a Primary Frontage and the Settlement Zone Line of Crewe, where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon highway safety, design and residential amenity satisfying the environmental sustainability role.

The proposal would satisfy the economic sustainability roles by providing employment in the locality.

In terms of the social role of sustainable development, the proposal would create additional residential accommodation in a sustainable location within the Town centre.

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve subject to conditions

CALL IN

The application has been called in to Committee by Councillor Brookfield also on behalf of Councillors Faseyi, Bailey & Flude. The reasons are:

- 1. The accommodation being proposed is substandard. The space proposed is far too small and there is insufficient natural daylight to the 'rooms'.*
- 2. There is an internal rubbish store - in this day and age this is clearly unacceptable. Ask yourselves would you like to reside next to the rubbish of your fellow residents and the proposed business occupiers?*
- 3. There are insufficient laundry provision provided for the residents.*

4. *There is no free parking or on-street parking available. It cannot be assumed in this day and age that residents will not need access to a vehicle for work etc.*

5. *Sandon Street - the rear street where the residents will access their 'rooms' is only an area with ongoing serious problems. Having accommodation of this nature in this area will inhibit any possible solutions to the ongoing and increasing social problems that are taking place here. We would formally request that this matter is looked into further and if necessary consultation with local Police and other organisations are undertaken. The approval of this subject application would we believe hinder the possibility of this area becoming gated to prevent anti-social behaviour.*

Further to the obvious concerns above we would respectfully ask the Planners, the Chair and other committee members to think strategically - to consider the potential impact on the future development of Crewe town centre. Residential accommodation is required for the town centre but let this be of a good standard - we believe this current application does not offer this.

PROPOSAL

The application is for the conversion of the existing two storey bank premises with a basement to form an estate agency or shop on the ground floor frontage, with 4 en-suite single bedrooms on the ground floor and 3 similar bedrooms on the first floor.

The basement would form a kitchen, cycle/refuse store and plant room. There would be two accesses to the building, one on the north side of the shopfront to Market Street and the other at basement level to the rear. Access to a roof terrace is possible from the first floor.

As part of the scheme external alterations would be carried out in terms of a new shopfront with two doorways and replacement windows and doors.

Applicant's statement

The revised layout is for 7 bedrooms (2 less than previously approved). By relocating the kitchen from the upper ground floor to the lower ground floor this has allowed the 4 bedrooms at upper ground level to be a more conventional shape/layout and overall better standard of accommodation. The applicant has also added 'brew stations' at upper ground and first floor levels following discussions and site visits with The Council's Housing Standards & Adaptations Officer.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is located on the eastern side of Market Street within the Crewe Settlement Boundary and the Crewe Town Centre Primary Frontage. The property is an end terraced two-storey unit with a flat roof. At ground floor is the former Lloyds TSB bank which is now vacant with offices above. At the rear is a service road and on the north side is a right of way leading down towards Chantry Court and the Lifestyle Centre.

RELEVANT HISTORY

15/4378N Change of Use of Disused Bank to Mixed Use of Self Contained Shop and HMO with 9 Letting Rooms Granted 25/1/2016

14/5479N - Prior notification for proposed change of former Lloyds Bank premises to class C – Refused - 15-Jan-2015

10/3015N - The Reinstatement of Two Previously Joined Shop Units, New Shopfronts and New Entrance Door – Approved - 29-Sep-2010

P06/1432 - Internally Illuminated Fascia Sign and Two Projecting Signs – Approved 3rd January 2007

P03/0038 - Replacement ATM Signage – Approved 13th February 2003

P98/0751 - Illuminated Fascia and Gable Signs – Approved 26th October 1998

P92/0776 - Alterations to shop front – Approved 9th October 1992

P91/0017 - Cashpoint Machine – Approved 7th November 1991

7/18043 - Alterations to form extension to bank – Approved 2nd February 1990

7/18042 - Advertisement signs – Approved 27th February 1990

7/10391 - Alterations to front – Approved 14th October 1993

7/04936 - Extension of existing Bank Premises – Approved 25th January 1979

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy:

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance are paragraphs 14 and 19.

Development Plan:

The Development Plan for this area is the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011

S.2 – Crewe Town Centre Primary Frontages

BE.1 – Amenity

BE.2 – Design Standards

BE.3 – Access and Parking

BE.4 – Drainage, Utilities and Resources

BE.18 - Shop Fronts and Advertisements

RES.9 – Houses in Multiple Occupation

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy:

SD 1 Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
SD 2 Sustainable Development Principles
SE 1 Design
SE 2 Efficient Use of Land
SE 5 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
SE 9 Energy Efficient Development
SE 12 Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability
EG1 Economic Prosperity

CONSULTATIONS:

CREWE TOWN COUNCIL: The Town Council would welcome residential uses in the town centre if they are apartments of good quality which will widen the mix of housing in the town centre. It considers that the proposed accommodation is substandard with insufficient laundry and communal space for the number of units proposed. There is no bin storage indicated on the plans and no parking available. There is no on-street or free off-street parking available in the immediate vicinity. The Town Council therefore objects to the current proposal.

Highways: The Head of Strategic Infrastructure (HSI) raises no objections

Environmental Protection: No objections subject to conditions relating to hours of use of the office and hours of construction works

Housing: If the application is approved then the property will require a licence to operate as an HMO.

REPRESENTATIONS:

At the time of report writing no representations have been received which can be viewed in full on the Council website.

APPRAISAL

The key issues to be considered in the determination of this application are set out below.

Principle of Development

The site lies in the Settlement Zone Line as designated in the adopted Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan First Review 2005, where there is the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The issue in question is whether this proposal represents sustainable development and whether there are other material considerations associated with this proposal, which are a sufficient material consideration to outweigh the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Sustainability

The National Planning Policy Framework definition of sustainable development is:

“Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don’t mean worse lives for future generations. Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate. Sustainable development is about change for the better, and not only in our built environment”

There are, however, three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy

an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;

a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and

These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Crewe Town Centre

The proposal site is situated within the settlement boundary of Crewe and within the town centre and an area designated retail frontage under Policy S.9 within the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011.

As the site lies within a designated retail area there is a presumption against development which would harm the character of the area. The proposal will retain the current streetscene frontage, the A2 use is an existing lawful use and is being reduced in floor area, and the property has been empty for several years.

It is therefore considered that in this instance a change of use aspect of the proposal is acceptable in principle under policy S.9, subject to the proposal not having a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity, highway safety or the existing streetscene, and therefore must comply with

policies BE.1 (amenity), BE.2 (Design Standards) and BE.3 (Access and Parking) of the Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan.

Highways

The change of use to an A2 and 7 HMOs will not result in a large increase in traffic generation over the existing use. The nearest long stay car park is within easy walking distance at Oak Street to the south.

Usually CEC parking standards would require 1 off-road space to be provided for each bedroom. Given the small scale of the proposal, the sustainable location, low car ownership levels for apartments in this location, the availability of nearby public car parks, and the existing TROs outside the site (which would prevent parked cars blocking the highway) the parking provision is not considered to be an issue.

Shared cycle storage has also been proposed as part of this application.

No highways objection is raised under policies RES.9 and BE.3.

Design

There are no design implications arising from the development as all alterations are appropriate to this modern building. There are some fenestration alterations but they will have no impact on the visual appearance of the building or the surrounding streetscene. It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in this position.

Amenity

The site adjoins a retail shop and therefore the proposed use is a complimentary use adjacent to retail units. Furthermore, the Environmental Health department have raised no objections however, have requested specific conditions in relation to hours of opening of the office/shop, and this is considered to be reasonable

The property has no private amenity space, which is an issue in terms of policy RES.9. However the location of the site gives easy access to indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and there is space available for cycle, refuse and domestic storage and possible clothes drying. Account must also be taken of the existing permission for 9 bedrooms which can be taken up if this application is refused. It is therefore considered that the proposed change of use is acceptable.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

The proposal will bring empty commercial premises into use and create economic benefits from the construction and future use.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The proposal would create additional residential accommodation in an accessible location within the town centre.

Response to Objections

The objections have raised specific points as follows:

1. Size of rooms and daylight. This will be addressed under licensing procedures.
2. Refuse storage. This is proposed within the basement area, and this is considered to be preferable to outside storage.
3. Inadequate laundry facilities. These are provided within the kitchen at basement level.
4. Lack of off-street parking. This has been assessed by the Strategic Infrastructure manager and found to be acceptable
5. Increased risk of anti-social behaviour at rear of premises. Access to the residential accommodation is provided at the front of the property as well as at the rear. The proposal would have no adverse impacts over and above the existing permission.

Conclusion

The site is within the Settlement Zone Line and Town Centre of Crewe, where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The proposal is considered to comply with the 4 criteria of policy RES.9 for the reasons given above, and the existing planning permission for a 9 bedroom development adds weight to the merits of the scheme. Subject to conditions, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact upon highway safety and residential amenity satisfying the environmental sustainability role.

The proposal would satisfy the economic sustainability roles by providing employment in the locality.

In terms of the social role of sustainable development, the development would create additional residential accommodation within an accessible location.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve subject to the following conditions:

1. **3 years commencement**
2. **Compliance with approved plans**
3. **Materials as specified**
4. **Hours of use restriction for office**
5. **Refuse and cycle storage to be provided as shown**

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 her 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.

