

Application No: 19/4258N

Location: 5, EDLESTON ROAD, CREWE, CW2 7HJ

Proposal: Conversion of existing veterinarian practice to 8 occupant HMO

Applicant: Ms Gosclio

Expiry Date: 27-Nov-2019

### **SUMMARY:**

The site is within 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 neutral in terms of its impact upon design, highway safety and residential amenity; satisfying the environmental sustainability role.

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 proposal would not provide any parking provision. However no parking spaces exist for the current vets use and parking and traffic demand for both uses is considered to be comparable. Future occupants would also make use of local public transport options.

Therefore the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**Approve subject to conditions**

### **REASON FOR REFFERAL**

The application has been called into planning committee given a call in request from Ward Councillor Hogben for the following reasons:

- Absence of any proposed parking provision, with resulting likely impact on the surrounding area, where on-street parking already leads to severe congestion that endangers pedestrians.
- Concerns about the provision within the application for adequate waste storage and collection, with likely resulting impact on surrounding area which is already a fly tipping hot spot in Crewe.
- Concerns about room sizes and the amenity of any future residents of the proposed HMO.

- Reforms to HMO licensing which are intended to tighten up requirements, and concerns about the quality of landlord supervision of the property and tenants.
- Unacceptable increase to HMO density within the area, with policy implications for Cheshire East Council that should be addressed within the Local Plan. An Article 4 direction is needed in the area, which is already overloaded with HMOs. The Committee needs to address this requirement in the light of the council's intentions on this matter.
- Compliance with Policy SE12 of the Local Plan to prevent harmful or cumulative impact upon air quality. This proposal borders onto the Nantwich Road Air Quality Management Area.

## **PROPOSAL**

The proposal seeks to the change of use from existing veterinarian practice to 8 occupant HMO (House in Multiple Occupation)

The external changes include upgrading exists windows and adding a new first floor and ground floor window to the southern elevation

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The application site is located off Edleston Road not far from the junction with Nantwich Road.

The existing property was last in use as a vets practice.

Area has a mix of residential and commercial uses with residential to both sides.

Currently no parking area available.

Rear yard area accessed by an alleyway off Hope Street.

Located in the Settlement Boundary and Nantwich Road Shopping Area as per the Local Plan.

## **RELEVANT HISTORY**

18/4821N – Change of use from vacant veterinary surgery (Use Class D1) to 2no. residential apartments – approved 26-Nov-2018

10/0151N – Rear Extension to Permit Revision of Veterinary Layout to Comply with RCVS Standards and to Re-Instate Secondary Escape from First Floor Area – approved 30-Mar-2010

7/13902 – Conversion of flat in additional veterinary surgery – approved 07-Apr-1987

## **NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY**

### **Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Adopted Version (CELP)**

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

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  
Appendix C Parking Standards

**Development Plan:**

It should be noted that the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy was formally adopted on 27th July 2017. There are however policies within the legacy Local Plan that still apply and have not yet been replaced. These policies are set out below.

Saved policies of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan:

BE1 Amenity  
BE3 Access and Parking  
BE4 Drainage, Utilities and Resources  
E4 Development on Existing Employment Areas  
RES2 Unallocated Housing Sites  
RES9 House in Multiple Occupation

**SPD:**

Design Guide  
Provision of Private Open Space in New Residential Developments

**National Policy:**

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Of particular relevance are paragraphs:

11. Presumption in favour of sustainable development.  
59. Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

**CONSULTATIONS:**

**Town Council:** Objection given the lack of parking provision

**CEC Highways:** No objection

**CEC Environmental Protection:** No objection subject to conditions/informatives regarding working hours for construction, waste provision, low emission boilers and contaminated land

**CEC Housing:** No objection

**CEC Housing Adaptions:** No objection however offer advice noted to the applicant regarding licencing

**ANSA (Bins):** No comments received at the time of writing the report

**REPRESENTATIONS:** No comments received at the time of writing the report

## **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 Cheshire East Local Plan, where there is the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

As a result the proposal is acceptable from a land use perspective.

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

### **Houses in Multiple Occupation**

Policy RES.9 advises that proposals for the sub-division of buildings to provide self-contained residential units will be permitted 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;

In this case no extensions are proposed so the proposal complies with these criteria.

- 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;

Only external changes are new windows on the southern elevation. These are considered to constitute very limited visual changes and would not adversely change the external appearance of the building and therefore the proposal complies with this criteria.

- The development does not detract significantly from the amenities of neighbouring residents, through noise transmission or overlooking, (in accordance with policy be.1); and

There are already side facing windows on the southern elevation and the existing building has extant approval for residential use and thus an element of overlooking is to be expected. Therefore the proposal would not significantly affect amenity of neighbouring properties and complies with this criteria.

- Provision is made within the site for adequate and properly located car parking and safe access (in accordance with policies TRAN.9 and BE.3) where sufficient off-street parking provision is not possible due to the constraints of the site, kerbside facilities may be acceptable provided that their use does not create or worsen dangerous highway conditions, or significantly detract from the amenity of local residents.

No parking provision is proposed, however there is also no provision for the existing vets practice use and vehicular trips/parking demand for both existing and proposed use are considered to be similar. Accordingly it is considered that there is no significant increase in parking demand or demand for travel to and from the site and on this basis the proposal complies with this criteria.

## **Highways**

The proposal is for an 8 bed HMO which will provide no off-road parking as is typically the case with properties in this location.

Cheshire East Parking Services have stated that parking is an issue in the area including on the adjacent streets and with extra demand created from HMOs.

However a vets would have had a number of staff working at it who could potentially drive to the site and park on the adjacent streets throughout the day, and partly in the evening as a vets can remain open for those appointments made after a working day.

With regards to this proposal, data for apartments for the local area indicates that car ownership levels are low and that only a few cars would be owned for the 8 beds. There is therefore considered little difference between parking demand between the existing lawful commercial use and the proposed HMO use.

There are 24hr parking restrictions on Edleston Road and therefore parking associated with the proposal would not restrict the free flow of traffic along this main road or at the nearby junction with Nantwich Road. There are day time restrictions on the adjacent side streets but evening parking is allowed. There is also a free car park a few minutes walk from the site on Lord Street.

The proposal is also within a highly sustainable location and within a short walking distance to a large number of shops, services and amenities, frequent bus services, and to Crewe train station.

Finally details of cycle storage will be secured by condition.

The Councils Highways Manager has raised no objection to the proposal.

## **Design**

The proposal would predominantly result in internal changes. The only external changes would be replacement of windows and x2 additional windows on the southern elevation and are therefore considered limited visual changes. The character of the area is mixed commercial/residential so it is not expected that the residential use would harm the character of the area.

Therefore it is not considered that the proposal would cause any visual harm to the overall character/appearance of the area.

## **Amenity**

- Surrounding neighbouring properties

The properties most affected by this proposal are Nos.3, 7 & 14 Edleston Road.

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 on the northern elevation facing No.7 Edleston Road or western elevation facing No.14 Edleston Road.

2x new windows are proposed (x1 at ground floor serving bedroom and x1 at first floor serving bathroom) on the southern elevation facing No.3 Edleston Road.

It is also likely that the proposed first floor window would be fitted with frosted glass given that it serves a bathroom which would reduce overlooking. It should also be noted that the site has an extant approval for change of use to x2 apartments with side facing windows therefore an element of overlooking is to be expected.

There are currently side facing windows on the southern elevation of the existing building therefore an element of overlooking of the rear garden area of No.3 already exists and it is not considered that the proposed use or additional windows would make thus significantly worse.

- Future occupants

The proposal would provide an area of private open space to the rear of the property measuring 62 square metres where residents could undertake basic outdoor duties/activities such as sitting out and clothes drying.

The 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.

In this case each occupant could make use of the shared amenity area to the rear and a communal kitchen/dining area is also provided on the ground floor.

There are also areas of open space 300m away to the west of the site which could be used by future occupants and Crewe Town Centre is just a short walk from the site. Both of these options would provide access to outdoor amenity space.

### **Bin storage/waste collection**

The plans do not show an area for bin storage however the supporting design and access statement advises that the bins would be stored in the rear garden area which could be wheeled out to the highway on collection day. It is therefore necessary to secure a bin storage area by condition.

As a result it is considered that suitable bin storage could be provided.

### **Housing standards**

The Housing Standards and Adaptions Team have been consulted and have not raised any objections but have offered advice noted to the applicant regarding licensing.

Any issues regarding room sizes would be addressed through legislation outside of planning and is not a relevant consideration to the determination of a planning application.

### **Economic benefit**

The proposal would create economic benefits from employment during the conversion works and spending power of the future occupants.

### **Social benefit**

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

### **Other**

No pre-commencement conditions are required.

No Neighbourhood Plan is in force for this area.

An informative will be added to any decision notice regarding CIL.

### **Conclusion**

The site is within 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 neutral in terms of its impact upon design, highway safety and residential amenity satisfying the environmental sustainability role.

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 dis-benefit would be the loss of the existing employment use however there is no policy protection for the existing use. The proposal would also not provide any parking provision. However no parking spaces exist for the current vets use and parking and traffic demand for both uses is considered to be similar. Future occupants would also make use of local public transport options.

Therefore the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Time limit
- 2) Approved plans
- 3) Details of cycle parking
- 4) Details of bin storage

## 5) Low emission boilers

In order to give proper effect to the Board`s/Committee`s intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning (Regulation) in consultation with the Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) to correct any technical slip or omission in the resolution, before issue of the decision notice.



