

Application No: 20/3505M

Location: 4, Victoria Street, Knutsford, WA16 6HY

Proposal: Change of use from C1 (Hotel) to C4 (HMO)

Applicant: Mr Massoud Ahoovie, Longview Hotel

Expiry Date: 06-Nov-2020

### **SUMMARY**

The proposal is for the conversion of part of the existing Longview Hotel into a six-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation. It is considered that the proposed HMO would not have a materially different impact on the character of the area and residential amenity than the hotel use.

No off-street parking is proposed for the HMO. However, the site lies within a sustainable location, close to services, facilities and public transport. The proposal includes cycle storage.

The proposed internal areas would meet the minimum standards set out within the draft HMO SPD.

### **SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION**

Approve subject to conditions

### **REASON FOR REPORT**

The planning application has been referred to the Northern Planning Committee, as it is related to another planning application for the conversion of another part of the hotel (20/3684M). This related planning application was called to committee by the Local Ward Member for the following reasons:

*“The proposal would be detrimental to the Character of the Knutsford Town Centre Conservation Area. Furthermore as part of a terrace of buildings the proposal would have detrimental impact upon the amenity of the occupiers of the adjoining residential (C3) properties; especially as the hotel accommodation is in two properties with a private C3 unit in between. As such this proposal would fall foul of the recently adopted Draft SPD on HMOs. Finally there is insufficient parking to accommodate the number of units proposed in an area where on-street parking is at a premium and additional parking pressure would ensue.”*

## **DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND CONTEXT**

The application site is an end terrace property, which forms part of the Longview Hotel. The current site accommodates 5 hotel rooms over three floors with an additional basement area.

The site lies within a predominately residential area of Knutsford. It is an attractive Victorian Property. It lies outside of the Town centre Conservation Area.

The Site is within the impact zone for the Tatton Mere SSSI.

## **DETAILS OF PROPOSAL**

The proposal is for the partial conversion of the existing Hotel (C1) to a six-bedroom House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Further information has also been provided regarding the cycle and refuse storage.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

20/3684M – pending consideration  
Change of use from C1 (hotel) to 9 bed HMO and 2 apartments

20/2023M – approved – 28 July 2020  
Removal and reinstatement on a like-for-like basis of existing chimney stack to number 51 on health and safety grounds

20/0227M – approved – 6 March 2020  
Non-material amendment on approval 17/6467M

17/6467M – approved – 16 November 2018  
Existing hotel to be converted into 8no. apartments (within conservation area) 2no. new build town houses to be built on associated parking area (outside of conservation area)

03/2625P – approved – 13 November 2003  
Change of use from residential to additional hotel accommodation for longview hotel. Erection of 2no. Dormer windows to side elevation and a single storey rear extension.

## **POLICIES**

### Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy (CELPS)

MP 1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
PG 2 – Settlement Hierarchy  
SD 2 – Sustainable Development Principles  
SE 1 – Design  
SE 3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity  
SE 7 – The Historic Environment  
SE 12 – Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability  
CO 1 – Sustainable Travel and Transport  
Appendix C – Parking Standards

### Macclesfield Borough Local Plan (MBLP)

H6 – Town Centre Housing  
DC3 – Amenity  
DC6 – Circulation and Access

### Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan (KNP)

ER5 – Overnight Accommodation  
E3 – Habitat Protection and Biodiversity  
E5 – Pollution  
HW1 – Health and Wellbeing  
HE 2 – Heritage Assets  
HE 3 – Conservation Areas  
H1 – Housing Mix  
T2 – Cycling in Knutsford  
T4 – Parking

## **OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019)

Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed places  
Chapter 15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment  
Chapter 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### Knutsford Design Guide

### Revised Publication Draft Site Allocations and Development Policies Document

ENV 13 – Aircraft Noise  
HOU 4 – Houses in Multiple Occupation  
HOU 10 – Amenity  
HOU 11 - Residential Standards

### Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

## **CONSULTATIONS (EXTERNAL TO PLANNING)**

**Strategic Housing** – No comments to make

**Housing Standards** - No objection subject to development being compliant with Planning and Building Control legislation, as well as the Council's adopted standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation. HMO properties containing five or more occupants, forming two or more households are required to obtain a licence under Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004, prior to its occupation as a HMO.

**Head of Strategic Transport** - No objection

**ANSA Greenspace** - No comments received

**Natural England** – No comments to make

**Knutsford Town Council** - Object on the following grounds:

- a. The proposed development would present an unneighbourly relationship with the adjacent property.
- b. The proposal is out of keeping of the residential character of the other private-residential properties in the area
- c. The proposal fails to meet policies T2 and T4 of the Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan.
- d. The accommodation proposed within the application falls below unit-size requirements outlined by the draft supplementary planning policy on HMOs of Cheshire East Council

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

Two representations received objecting to the proposal. The main concerns are summarised below:

- Not enough parking. The building is already occupied by various tenants who have cars
- Existing traffic issues congestion being made worse by significant housing developments on the outskirts of Knutsford.
- More houses being bought to let, rather than people living in the town and creating the community. Prime target for people looking to buy them as an investment.

## **OFFICER APPRAISAL**

### **Principle of development**

The application site lies within Knutsford, which CELPS policy PG 2 identifies as a Key Service Centre. This policy supports development within Key Service Centres, where it is of a scale, location and nature that recognises and reinforces the distinctive of the individual towns.

Planning permission was granted for the building to be used as ancillary accommodation for the Longview Hotel at 51 and 55 Manchester Road hotel in 2003 (03/2625P refers). 51 Manchester Road is proposed to be converted into an HMO and is subject to a separate planning application (20/3684M refers). 55 Manchester Road would be retained as hotel accommodation.

The principle of the proposed development on this site is therefore acceptable, subject to compliance with the other relevant policies of the adopted development plan.

### **Character and Appearance**

CELPS policy SD 2 requires developments to contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness. This includes its relationship to neighbouring properties, streetscene and the wider neighbourhood.

The application site lies within an area that is classified as typically residential. However, the site is not in a residential use. It is currently occupied as a hotel, which falls within a C1 use class. The nature of hotels means that residents are transient, coming and going for short periods of time. A hotel would typically function in a different way to a C3 residential property, generating greater levels of activity and movement.

It is not considered that the proposal for a six-bedroom house of multiple occupation would be materially different to the current use as a hotel or would result in an increase of movement that would be detrimental to the area.

An HMO of the size proposed would require a licence. This would cover the management of the HMO and the maximum number of residents, who could live at the property.

There is nothing within the submission to indicate a conflict with CELPS policy SD 2, particularly having regard to its current use as a hotel.

### **Heritage Assets**

The application site lies within the Knutsford Town Centre Conservation Area. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

The NPPF identifies Conservation Areas as designated heritage assets. NPPF paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 194 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

CELPS policy SE 7 relates to the historic environment. This states that the Council will support development proposals that do not cause harm to, or which better reveal the significance of heritage assets. Conversely, clear and convincing justification will be required, where a scheme would result in harm to a heritage asset and its significant.

KNP policy HE2 relates to Heritage Assets and states that development which causes unacceptable harm to the significance of heritage assets will be resisted. KNP policy HE 3 relates to Conservation Area. It requires developments to comply with design principles. The Hotel is identified as being a building of townscape merit within the Knutsford Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal.

The application site is not listed and lies just outside of the Knutsford Town Centre Conservation Area. The Council's Heritage Officer has not raised any objections to the

proposal, on the basis that the works are internal only. The proposal would not adversely affect the appearance of the existing building or the setting of the Conservation Area.

### **Neighbour amenity**

NPPF paragraph 127f) requires developments to have a standard of amenity for existing and future users. As above, CELPS policy SD2 requires proposals to contribute positively to an area's character, including its relationship with neighbouring properties.

Saved MBLP policy DC3 states that development should not significantly injure the amenities of adjoining or nearby residential property or sensitive uses due to, amongst other matters, noise, smells, traffic generation, access and car parking.

As above the baseline for assessing the impact of the development on the amenities of neighbouring properties, is its current use as a hotel. As above, hotels are likely to generate more activity than would typically be expected in a residential dwelling, due to the presence of employees and a regular turnover of guests.

The part of the hotel to be converted currently has five hotel bedrooms. This would be converted to six-bedroom HMO. Residents are also likely to be living at the property for longer periods than hotel guests would be. Similarly, it would be unlikely to require the same number of employees to maintain the premises. It is not considered that the development would result in an increase in activity or noise which would be detrimental to the amenities of neighbouring residents.

As no changes are proposed externally, the relationship between the built form of the property and neighbouring properties would be maintained.

It is considered that the proposal have an acceptable relationship with neighbouring properties.

### **Residential amenity standards**

As with neighbouring properties, NPPF paragraph 127f) requires a high standard of amenity. This is reiterated within CELPS policies SC 2 and SE 1.

The draft local plan includes policies relating to amenity, including HOU 4, which is specific to houses in multiple occupation and HOU 10 and 11, which relate to amenity and residential standards respectively.

The LPA is also producing a Supplementary Planning Document, for Houses in Multiple Occupation. The draft form of this document is currently out for consultation.

The draft SADPD policies and the SPD only carry very limited weight, as they have not yet been adopted.

The Town Council have raised concerns that the proposed rooms would not meet the minimum room sizes as set out within the draft SPD. This requires a double room to have a

minimum size of at least 10.22sqm. Single rooms should have minimum dimensions of 6.51m along with access to at least one opening window.

Of the rooms proposed, the smallest would have an area of 9.02sqm (including the en-suite), which is proposed to be a single room. This is in excess of the minimum size required within the draft SPD. All of the bedrooms would have access to opening windows.

It is considered that the internal amenity space for the inhabitants would be acceptable.

Externally a small communal amenity space is proposed, along with cycle and refuse storage areas. Details of these areas will be required by condition.

## **Aircraft Noise**

CELPs policy SE 12 relates to pollution land contamination and land instability. It states that amongst other matters, development for new housing will not normally be permitted where existing noise levels are unacceptable and there is no reasonable prospect that these can be mitigated against.

Saved MBLP policy T18 deals with new development in areas affected by aircraft noise. In areas subject to daytime noise levels between 57 and 66 LAeq 16hr (0700-2300), and/or night-time noise levels between 48 and 57 LAeq 8 hr (2300 -0700), planning permission for residential development, will only be granted if soundproofing is provided to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Formal comments are awaited from The Council's Environmental Health Team, however in terms of the similar application 51 Manchester Road (20/3684M), which is in very close proximity to the applications site, they advised that the related application site lies within the following noise contours:

- 54 to 57 LAeq 16 hr (daytime)
- 48 - 51 LAeq 8 hr (night-time)

The application site lies within the same noise contour, so the requirement for a Noise Impact Assessment would be required to demonstrate that adequate soundproofing can be provided, in accordance with saved MBLP policy T18.

However, it is noted that a Noise Impact Assessment was not submitted as part of the extant permission 17/6467M. The officer report states that:

*"Environmental Health initially requested that an acoustic assessment be submitted as the site lies within the Manchester Airport aircraft contours map. However, they have subsequently advised that a planning balanced approach be taken. Therefore, as the sites are close to The Heath, which is large open public area available for recreation and the site is within the lower end of the dba contours 54-57, as is most of the town centre, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable."*

It is considered that given the conclusions on this previous scheme, it would not be reasonable to now request a noise impact assessment.

## **Parking and highway safety**

CELPS policy CO1 relates to sustainable travel and transport. It seeks to deliver a safe, sustainable and high-quality transport system. This includes by ensuring developments provide secure cycle parking facilities. CELPS appendix C sets out the Council's Adopted Parking Standards. This states that for hotels (C1) use, one parking space should be provided per dwelling. Smaller HMOs, which fall within use class C4 (i.e. up to six residents), require the same amount of parking spaces as a residential property.

KNP policy T2 requires all new developments to show how they will seek to support cycling within the Town. It also requires new developments to provide appropriate cycle infrastructure and parking.

KNP policy T4 requires all new developments to provide parking to meet needs in line with the CELPS, Design Guide and the Knutsford Design Guide.

No on-site parking is proposed as part of the proposal. As such this would not meet the requirements set out within the adopted Parking Standards. Highways Officers were consulted on the proposal. They highlighted the sustainability of the location, in terms of its proximity to local shops and services, as well as public transport routes. They have also advised that the car parking demand for HMOs is generally very low. Taking these factors into account, they have not raised any objections to the scheme.

The proposal has been amended during the lifetime of the application to include cycle parking. This is required to ensure compliance with CELPS policy CO1 and KNP policy T2. A condition is necessary requiring details of the cycle storage and its installation, prior to first occupation.

## **Nature Conservation**

CELPS policy SE 3 relates to biodiversity and geodiversity. It seeks to protect and enhance areas of high biodiversity and geodiversity. It states that development proposal likely to have an adverse impact on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will not normally be permitted.

The application site lies within one of the Impact Zones for the Tatton Meres SSSI. Natural England confirmed that they have no comments to make on the proposal. As such an assessment of likely Effects is not required. It is not considered that the development would be likely to have an adverse impact on the nearby SSSI.

## **Conclusions**

It is considered that the proposed change of use would not materially alter the character and appearance of the wider area and would not adversely affect the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. While no on-site parking is proposed, it is considered that this would be acceptable, given the sustainable location of the site. It is recommended that the application is approved subject to the following conditions:



- 1. Commencement of development within three years**
- 2. Development in accordance with the approved plans**
- 3. Details and implementation of cycle storage (prior to first occupation)**
- 4. Details and implementation of refuse storage (prior to first occupation)**
- 5. Details of landscaping for amenity space and implementation within first planting season following occupation**

*In order to give proper effect to the Northern Committee's intent and without changing the substance of its decision, authority is delegated to the Head of Planning 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.*

