

Planning Committee

17 September 2015

Reference:
APP/15/00694

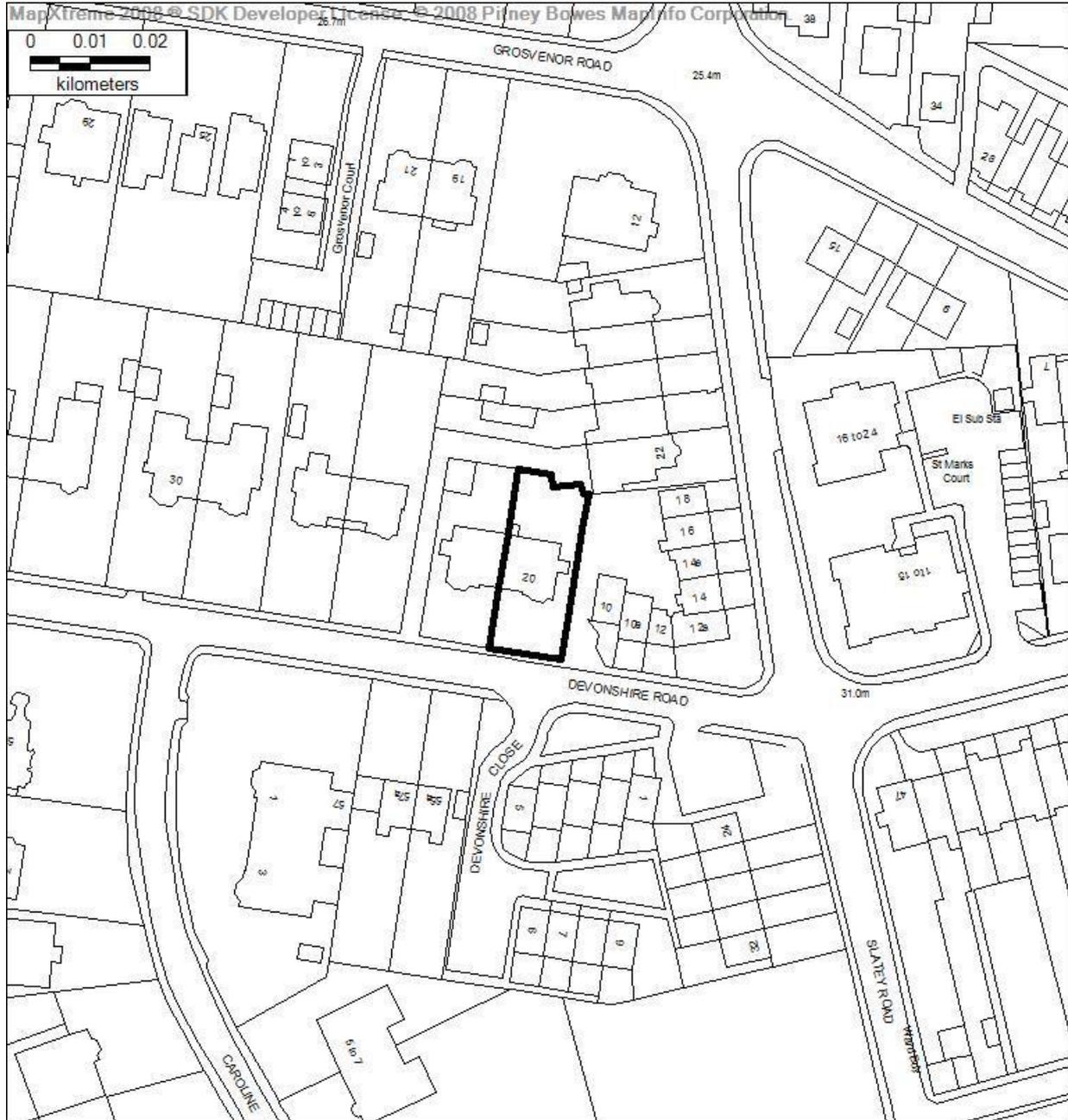
Area Team:
North Team

Case Officer:
Mr N Williams

Ward:
Oxton

Location: 20 Devonshire Road, Oxton, Wirral, CH43 1TW
Proposal: Conversion of basement to a two bedroom flat
Applicant: Mr H Knowles
Agent : SDA Architecture & Surveying

Site Plan:



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Development Plan allocation and policies:

Primarily Residential Area

Density and Design Guidelines Area

Planning History:

There is no relevant planning history for this site.

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:

REPRESENTATIONS

Having regard to the Council's Guidance for Publicity on Planning Applications, 17 notifications were sent to adjoining properties and a site notice was displayed near the site. At the time of writing, there had been 3 objections and a petition containing 14 signatures. These objections can be summarised as follows:

1. Not objecting to the conversion just the derelict state of the building
2. Environmental Health Department have served a notice on the owner
3. The whole house should be improved
4. Back of the property is used as a dumping ground
5. Feel that living by this property is very unhealthy
6. Issues with the structure of the building have not been addressed
7. State of the property is having a severe negative impact upon enjoyment of properties and the area generally
8. Concern that the owner is putting off more urgent repairs
9. Can the planning permission be accompanied by an order that the remainder of the property also be fully repaired

CONSULTATIONS

Head of Environment & Regulation (Pollution Control Division) - No objection

Head of Environment & Regulation (Traffic and Transportation Division) - No objection

Director's Comments:

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO PLANNING COMMITTEE

The agents for this application are SDA, a partner in which is an Elected Member of the Council. As there have been objections to these proposals (outlined in representations above) this application is required to be determined by the Planning Committee under the provisions of the Scheme of Delegation for Determining Applications approved by Council in March 2014.

INTRODUCTION

The application is for the conversion of the basement into a two-bedroom flat. The applicants advise that the property has been converted to three self-contained flats with a large basement area which is not being used.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The property is a large semi-detached building which is currently vacant and in a fairly poor state of repair. The site is designated within Wirral's Unitary Development Plan as in a Primarily Residential Area, and in keeping with this, the surrounding area contains a variety of residential premises.

POLICY CONTEXT

The proposal is subject to Wirral Unitary Development Plan Policy HS13: Self-Contained Flat Conversions and Supplementary Planning Document 2 Designing for self-contained flat development and conversions.

The advice contained within these policy documents states that proposals for the conversion of existing buildings into self-contained flats will be permitted providing the following criteria is satisfied:

- the conversion ensures the privacy of neighbours and occupants including the layout of car parking area to prevent overlooking of habitable room windows
- access provided to individual flats within the main structure of the building
- any new windows serving habitable rooms do not overlook adjoining properties to an unacceptable

- degree
- interior vertical proportions do not cut across windows and ceiling height reductions are not visible externally
- any basement flat having windows with two thirds of their height above existing outside ground level giving sufficient daylight penetration, a reasonable outlook and not immediately adjacent to parking bays.

APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

There are other basements utilised for living space within the area, including the adjoining property. The basement of this property looks to have been used previously for residential use, and although there will be additional excavation to allow greater outlook, this will have minimal impact on the appearance of the building, especially given that the adjoining property has a similar amount of land excavated to allow residential use of the basement.

The site contains parking for two cars and a cycle space is also proposed as part of the redevelopment work. The floor plan provides level access to all living and communal areas. These are of a good size and rear of the proposed apartment will have access onto a small patio area and garden space.

A large part of the objections received focus on the poor condition of the property as a reason to refuse the application. However, whilst the property is in a poor condition and does detract from the character of the area, this in itself is not sufficient reason to warrant refusal of the application. On the contrary, it could be argued that allowing a further residential unit in the basement will permit the owner sufficient finance to renovate the whole property.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

Separation distances do not apply in this instance, as no residential properties will be affected by the proposed development.

HIGHWAY/TRAFFIC IMPLICATIONS

There are no Highway Implications relating to this proposal.

ENVIRONMENTAL/SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

There are no Environmental/Sustainability issues relating to these proposals.

HEALTH ISSUES

There are no health implications relating to this application.

CONCLUSION

The conversion of the basement to a two bed roomed flat is considered acceptable within this residential location. The proposed development complies with the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and Unitary development Plan Policy HS13 and will not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of either existing or future occupiers and will permit the owner sufficient finance to renovate the whole property.

Summary of Decision:

Having regards to the individual merits of this application the decision to grant Planning Permission has been taken having regards to the relevant Policies and Proposals in the Wirral Unitary Development Plan (Adopted February 2000) and all relevant material considerations including national policy advice. In reaching this decision the Local Planning Authority has considered the following:-

The conversion of the basement to a two bed roomed flat is considered acceptable within this residential location. The proposed development complies with the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and Unitary development Plan Policy HS13 and will not have a detrimental impact on the residential amenities of either existing or future occupiers and will permit the owner sufficient finance to renovate the whole property.

Recommended Decision: **Approve**

Recommended Conditions and Reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the Local Planning Authority on 14th May 2015 and listed as follows:
191_2014_01

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to define this permission.

Further Notes for Committee:

Last Comments By: 03/07/2015 10:24:47

Expiry Date: 09/07/2015