

Planning Committee

19 October 2017

Reference:
APP/17/00986

Area Team: **South Team**
Case Officer: **Miss A McDougall**

Ward:
**Birkenhead and
Tranmere**

Location: 50A THE WOODLANDS, TRANMERE, CH41 2SJ
Proposal: Conversion of dwelling to four self contained apartments
Applicant: Mr & Mrs O'Kelley
Agent : Bryson Architecture

Site Plan:



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Development Plan designation and policies:

Primarily Residential Area

Planning History:

Location: 50A THE WOODLANDS, TRANMERE, CH41 2SJ
Application Type: Full Planning Permission
Proposal: Conversion of dwelling into four self-contained flats and construction of rear dormer window
Application No: APP/17/00126
Decision Date: 23/06/2017
Decision Type: Refuse

Summary Of Representations and Consultations Received:

REPRESENTATIONS:

Having regard to the Council Guidance on Publicity for Applications, 25 notifications were sent to adjoining properties. A site notice was also displayed. At the time of writing this report 2 objections have been received and a Qualifying petition of objection, listing the following grounds:

1. parking
2. appearance
3. anti social behaviour
4. proliferation of flats in the area

CONSULTATIONS:

Highways - No Objections

Birkenhead and Tranmere Neighbourhood Planning Forum - Objections raised due to UPVC windows and the impact onto the character of the conservation area

Conservation Areas Wirral - Objections on the ground of parking, bin collection and the increase number of flats in the area.

DIRECTORS COMMENTS:

REASON FOR REFERRAL

A qualifying petition of objection was received containing 33 signatures on the grounds of parking, bin collection and further flats in the area.

INTRODUCTION

The proposal is for the conversion of the existing dwelling into four self contained flats.

The application is a resubmission of refused application 17/00126, this application was refused for the following reason; ***The proposed dormer by reason of its design and external appearance is considered to have a detrimental impact on the visual quality of the dwelling and the character and appearance of the conservation area particularly when viewed from Lowwood Grove and is therefore contrary to Unitary Development Plan Policy CH2 - Development Affecting Conservation Areas.***

The plans have subsequently been amended to show the removal of the dormer window and the conversion of the roof space into a studio flat with an additional window to the side gable and roof lights to the rear elevation.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The principle of development is considered acceptable.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The property is located at the end of a row of 6 houses that form a terrace front The Woodlands, there are larger detached properties opposite that are listed buildings. The application site falls within Clifton Park Conservation Area and whilst the house and the established row of 6 properties are considered attractive in appearance they are not considered to be of historical importance. The terraced row itself is well formed, well maintained and visually balanced when viewed from The Woodlands. The application site also bounds Lowwood Grove which includes terraced properties that are of a similar age and appearance, the elevation facing Lowwood Grove is detailed and includes a two-storey bay that adds character to the street scene.

The existing dwelling is set over four floors, including a basement and rooms within the roof, to the rear the house has a two-storey outrigger with a gated entrance from Lowwood Grove.

POLICY CONTEXT

The following policies are relevant to the consideration of this proposal:

Clifton Park Conservation Area Appraisal

In the cases of semi-detached or terraced properties, the effect of any extension on the block as a whole must be considered if character is not to be lost. The materials, form and positioning of any extension must also be carefully considered if the buildings character is not to be lost. Materials

should be of a quality that matches the existing building and should not detract from it. Traditional materials would generally be preferable to man-made ones, however, there may be instances where a 'sleeker' more modern alternative (e.g. lightweight materials such as glass) may actually detract less. The form of any extension should consider the scale, proportion and massing of the original as well as roof pitch. A new extension should generally be positioned in an unobtrusive position as possible, with the rear elevation being preferred to the front and sides.

UDP Policy TR12 relates to the provision of cycle parking with new development

SPD2 sets out the criteria for new flat conversions

S13 Self-Contained Flat Conversions Policy

Proposals for the conversion of existing buildings into self-contained flats will be permitted subject to:

- (i) the conversion ensuring the privacy of neighbours and occupants including the layout of car parking areas to prevent overlooking of habitable room windows;
- (ii) access normally being provided to individual flats within the main structure of the building. If external staircases have to be provided they must not result in significant overlooking of neighbours' windows or private amenity space;
- (iii) any extensions required complying with Policy HS11;
- (iv) any new windows required to serve habitable rooms, such as living rooms, kitchens or bedrooms, not overlooking adjoining properties to an unacceptable degree;
- (v) any interior vertical partitions not cutting across windows and ceiling height reductions not being visible externally;
- (vi) adequate sound proofing between flats;
- (vii) any basement flat having windows with two-thirds of their height above the existing outside ground level giving sufficient daylight penetration, a reasonable outlook and not immediately adjacent to parking bays and vehicle accessways;
- (viii) main living rooms having a reasonable outlook and not lit solely by roof lights, nor in close proximity to high boundary or gable walls;
- (ix) access to rear yards/ gardens being provided from each flat;
- (x) adequate visibility at entrance and exit points and turning space for vehicles; and
- (xi) the proposal otherwise complying with Policy HS4 and Policy HS5.

CH2 Development Affecting Conservation Areas Policy

Development located within, adjacent to, or otherwise affecting the setting or special character of a Conservation Area, will be permitted where the visual and operational impact of the proposals can be demonstrated to preserve or enhance:

- (i) the distinctive characteristics of the Area, including important views into and out of the designated Area;
- (ii) the general design and layout of the Area, including the relationship between its buildings, structures, trees and characteristic open spaces; and
- (iii) the character and setting of period buildings and other elements which make a positive contribution to the appearance and special character of the Area.

When granting consent, special regard will be given to matters of detailed design, especially within

main frontages and prominent elevations, and to the nature, quality and type of materials proposed to be used.

The Joint Waste Local Plan -Policy WM9 relates to sustainable waste management and new development.

APPEARANCE AND AMENITY ISSUES

The proposal is to sub divide the existing single dwelling into four self contained flats. Three of the flats will be accessed from the front door entrance and one flat will be located within the two-storey outrigger with access from Lowwood Grove. Flat 1 is located on the ground floor and utilises the basement as a second bedroom, the basement has existing light wells to the front and side elevation, this is the only two bedroom flat.

The layout of each flat reflects the original setting of the building and utilises the existing windows with minimal internal alterations. The overall layout of each flat is considered acceptable, the proposal includes the removal of windows at ground floor and their replacement with French doors into the garden but this is considered to have a minimal impact on the appearance of the dwelling or the neighbouring properties as the original openings are to be retained.

There is a mix of type of flat given that there is one 2 bed flat, two 2 bed flats and a studio. The application has sought to address the original reason for refusal by removing the rear dormer extension, the overall setting and appearance of the building will remain as the existing property, the external alterations are considered to have a minimal impact on the appearance of the dwelling.

Having regard to the Conservation Area appraisal and Policy CH2, the conversion of the building is considered to have a minimal impact on the appearance of the building or the conservation area, therefore the proposal seeks to retain the character of the building and the special character of the conservation area.

Concerns have been raised with regards to parking, the area around the application site is restricted in terms of on street parking however the property is located approximately 76m from Birkenhead Key Town Centre and Borough Road which is a busy bus route as well as being approximately 320m from Birkenhead Central Train Station, therefore the application site is considered sustainable in terms of access to local amenities and public transport.

SEPARATION DISTANCES

The conversion utilises existing window openings, the conversion does include a new second floor side window that will serve the roof flat, this is a secondary window only and will allow for additional light and ventilation. The window is located in an existing side elevation that faces the front elevation of 5 Lowwood Grove, due to the established pattern of development this window would not meet the Council separation distances as the properties are approximately 15m apart however the proposed side window is at second floor and does not introduce window to window overlooking as outlook with be across the roof pitch of no.5, this window is not considered to have any additional impact with regards to the existing habitable room windows at 50a or no.5, this is also not the sole window to the second floor flat and is therefore considered acceptable.

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.

CONCLUSION

The proposed conversion has a minimal impact in terms of the setting and appearance of the building within the street scene and in terms of impact onto the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore acceptable having regard to Wirral's UDP Policies HS13, CH2, SPD2, TR12, SPG42 and WM9 and the Clifton Park Conservation Area Appraisal.

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 proposed conversion has a minimal impact in terms of the setting and appearance of the building within the street scene and in terms of impact onto the Conservation Area. The proposal is therefore acceptable having regard to Wirral's UDP Policies HS13, CH2, SPD2, TR12, SPG42 and WM9 and the Clifton Park Conservation Area Appraisal.

Recommended Decision: Approve

Recommended Conditions and Reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

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

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans received by the local planning authority on 28 September 2017 and listed as follows: 2016 152 004 Rev.07 & 2016 152 003 Rev.06.

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

3. Prior to the first occupation of the dwellings arrangements for the storage and disposal of refuse, and vehicle access thereto, shall be made within the curtilage of the site, in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance and adequate standards of hygiene and refuse collection, having regard to policies WM9 of the Waste Local Plan.

4. No development shall take place until details of secure covered cycle parking and/or storage facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These facilities shall be provided in accordance with the approved details and made available for use prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted and shall be retained for use at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure that satisfactory facilities for the parking of cycles are provided and to encourage travel by means other than the private car, having regard to Policy TR12 of the Wirral Unitary Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG42.

Last Comments By: 29/09/2017 09:02:27
Expiry Date: 17/10/2017