

Application Number: FUL/2019/0618

18-24 Lower Holyhead Road

Change of use of existing HMO student accommodation to 38 self-contained student flats with shared communal facilities, and erection of single storey outbuilding to rear.

WITHIN GREEN BELT?	No
VISIBLE FROM GREEN BELT?	No
WITHIN CONSERVATION AREA?	Yes – Spon Street
LISTED BUILDING?	No – LLB to rear

POLICY GUIDANCE

The Coventry Local Plan 2016 to 2031 has been adopted on 05/12/2017. Policies that are relevant include: DE1, HE2, H3, H5, H6, H10, DS3, GE3, AC1, AC4, IM1, EM5, EM7.
SPG Creating a More Sustainable City
SPG Design Guidance for New Residential Development
City Centre AAP, 2016
Appendix 5 - Car and Cycle Parking Standards for New Development

ADDRESS AND DATE OF NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION

- Neighbour notification was sent in accordance with the Communications Record.
- A site notice was erected at the site on 19/04/19
- A press notice was erected on 25/04/19
- No representations have been received.

RELEVANT HISTORY

LDC/2019/0500 Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for an existing use of student accommodation 4 x large HMO units (sui generis): Refused 30/05/19 on the basis that insufficient evidence had been provided to demonstrate that, on the balance of probability, No.18-24 Holyhead Road had been used continuously as a large-scale house in multiple occupation (sui generis) for a period in excess of 10 years.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways: No objection, subject to conditions.
EP: No objection, subject to conditions.
Drainage: No objection, subject to conditions.
Conservation: Initial design objection overcome through amendments.
West Midland's Fire service: No objection
West Midland's Police: No objection, suggest that development complies with SBD for new homes.
Education: No objection
UHCW: Contribution requested.

ISSUES

Site description

The property relates to a four storey block of four period terraces located on the northeast side of the highway within a predominantly residential streetscene. The site is within the leisure and entertainment area of the city centre and within Spon Street Conservation Area.

Proposal

Planning permission is sought for to convert the existing 36 bedroom student HMO into 38 self-contained units for student accommodation with associated communal areas and a rear outbuilding extension containing a gym and laundry.

ISSUES AND APPRAISAL

Principal of development

Local Plan Policy H3 states that new residential development must provide a high quality residential environment, which assists in delivering urban regeneration or contributes to creating sustainable communities and which overall enhances the built environment. A suitable residential environment will be sustainable and include safe and appropriate access, have adequate amenity space and parking provision and be safe from environmental pollutants such as land contamination, excessive noise and air quality issues.

Local Plan Policy H10 states that purpose-built student accommodation will be encouraged where: a) It is directly accessible from the universities; b) Such development can play a part in the regeneration of the immediate neighbourhoods without disadvantage to local services; c) It will not materially harm the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties; and d) It will reflect and support or enhance the appearance and character of the area. Policy H10 also states that to support the intended use of the proposals the specified tenure will be secured through a Section 106 agreement.

Although the recent lawful development certificate failed (LDGP/2019/0500) this was due to insufficient information having been submitted to corroborate exact resident numbers. The LPA recognise that the building has been used historically as a residential use and the current scheme seeks to enhance the existing accommodation by altering the current 36 bedroom HMO to 38 self-contained apartments, remaining as student accommodation. The site is within a highly sustainable location within the City Centre with excellent access to its shops, services and public transport links. The scheme will provide a suitable residential environment, with a safe and appropriate access and free from environmental pollutants and noise.

The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

Design/Conservation Area/heritage assets

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) 1990 imposes a duty when exercising planning functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of a Conservation Area.

Policy HE2 'Conservation and Heritage Assets' states that in order to help sustain the historic character, sense of place, environmental quality and local distinctiveness of Coventry, development proposals will be supported where they conserve and, where appropriate, enhance Heritage Assets, including Listed Buildings and Locally Listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

CCAAP Policy CC2 'Enhancement of Heritage Assets' states that all development within, or affecting the setting of, a Conservation Area shall preserve or enhance its character and appearance and all development relating to or in close proximity to heritage assets such as statutory and locally listed buildings, shall be undertaken sympathetically to those heritage assets and seek to preserve or enhance their setting.

Policy DE1 and H5 of the Coventry Local Plan 2016 which seeks to ensure that development complement or enhances the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, density, mass, design, materials and architectural features.

The Conservation Officer raises no objection to the use or the internal changes. Some of the proposed external changes are also noted as having a positive impact, such as the removal of an incongruous modern UPVC porch to the front elevation.

The Conservation Officer has raised concern with the proposed rear extensions, which visually link together a series of distinct terraced properties, impacting their historic pattern, relationship and form. The new extensions also introduce hipped roofs which are not characteristic of the terrace. Amended plans have been received and all extensions to the terrace have been deleted to ensure that the character and rhythm of the terrace block is not eroded. The element of the extension originally containing three self-contained units has been made into a detached outbuilding with the hip roof design altered to gable end, which better harmonises with the style and character of the main building. The laundry and gym have been relocated from the main house into the outbuilding, freeing up space to relocate and maintain the originally proposed 38 units within the terrace. A condition is suggested to secure elevational and roofing materials that match the existing main building.

Cycle storage lockers have been removed from the frontage and relocated to the rear garden, directly accessible by a side gate. These lockers are discreetly positioned, stand alone and easily reversible having a neutral impact upon the conservation area. A condition will secure an appropriate colour coating.

The scheme as amended is therefore considered to create an appropriate design solution that will integrate appropriately with the style and character of the host building and will not have any significant detrimental impact upon the visual amenity of the surrounding area or the character/setting of the conservation area/listed buildings in accordance with Policy DE1 and HE2 of the Local Plan.

Neighbouring amenity

Policy H5 requires new development to be designed and positioned so it does not adversely affect the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

The proposed residential use is considered to be compatible with surrounding residential uses and the extensions and alterations to facilitate the change of use will not result in any significant impact upon the outlook, light, privacy or amenities of the occupiers of surrounding properties.

In terms of resident's safety and security the Police have suggested that the development should meet with the design specifications and physical security measures that are outlined in Secured by Design (SBD) design guides for New Homes 2016. This has been added as a note for the applicant's information.

The scheme, as amended, is considered to create a good quality residential environment for future occupiers. EP had suggested that there should be an assessment of the party walls and floor between the gymnasium and the habitable rooms; however this is no longer needed as the gym has been relocated to an outbuilding. EP has also suggested a condition to control plant noise. There is an existing internal plant room which will be relocated as part of the layout changes. It is considered unreasonable to condition a noise survey for the internal plant.

Air quality

The standard condition to install low emission boilers has been applied to assist with air quality. Although there appears to be parking available on the frontage no parking is shown on plan or referred to within the application forms. EV charging has not therefore been requested.

Drainage

The Drainage Team has requested a condition for the incorporation of water re-use systems/ water butts, such as grey water harvesting, to manage rainfall runoff. The condition has not been applied given that this is not a new build and the only additional built form is a relatively minor outbuilding.

Highways issues

The scheme benefits from several car parking spaces (zero car parking would be acceptable within the City Centre) and cycle parking within lockers to the rear (1 space per 4 units in accordance with Appendix 5). Bin storage is located on the frontage, as per the existing situation. The Highway Authority has raised no objections to the scheme, subject to securing cycle parking prior to occupation.

Contributions/obligations

Education has confirmed that there are no contribution requirements for student accommodation/one bedroom units.

The NHS has requested a contribution for acute care based upon the creation of 38 new units. The case officer has advised the NHS that the existing property has 36 bedrooms and the overall increase in residents is therefore two. It would therefore be inappropriate to request a contribution on this basis. Given that these are self-contained units the case officer has advised the NHS that a condition will be applied restricting the maximum number of occupants to 38. The applicant has also been made aware of this condition.

The scheme would be equally acceptable as market residential accommodation, which would trigger affordable housing requirements. As the scheme is already restricted in occupant numbers it is also considered reasonable and necessary to restrict the use to student accommodation only. This has been secured by condition.

CONCLUSION

In view of the acceptable principle, appropriate design, siting and massing (as amended), and that the development will not result in any significant impact upon surrounding residents' amenity or highway safety the scheme accords with development plan policies and supplementary planning guidelines and therefore the application is recommended for approval.