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Dear Sir / Madam

SUPPORTING PLANNING REPORT FOR PLANNING APPLICATION - USE OF DWELLING AS TWO 5-BEDROOM FLATS (CLASS C4), AT 28 OLD MILL AVENUE, COVENTRY

This Report is in support of the above planning application.

Site Description and Proposal

The planning application proposes to use this large, semi-detached House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) as two 5-bedroom flats within Use Class C4.

The application site is located within a residential area on the eastern side of Old Mill Avenue near to the junction with Bransford Avenue. The property, which can currently be used as a small HMO, has a shared kitchen / lounge / dining room area at ground floor, an access from Old Mill Avenue and a pathway to the southern side leading to the rear garden.

The original property has been extended and was subsequently divided into two properties in 2012, with 28a Old Mill Avenue being located to the north of No.28. The property also has an extant planning permission to use No.28 as two flats (within Use Class C3).



The planning application proposes to use No.28 as two 5-bedroom flats within Use Class C4. Each flat would have 5 en-suite bedrooms and a shared kitchen/lounge area. The site currently has a surfaced parking area to the front and two dropped kerbs, which would remain available for the occupants of Nos.28 and 28a.

5 on-site car parking spaces would be provided for the proposed use, together with 3 spaces which would remain available for No.28a which is also in the applicant's ownership. The enclosed rear garden can be accessed from the pathway to the side of the property and would provide amenity areas together with space for bin storage and stands for up to 8 cycles.

Planning History

The original property sits in a large plot and has been the subject of various successful applications to extend it and then a further application to sub-divide into two dwellings in 2012.

Planning permission was granted for two 5-bedroom flats (with a condition restricting to Use Class C3) on 28 May 2019 (FUL/2019/0866).

A previous planning application for a *“Change of use to a house of multiple occupation (HMO) to provide 13 person's accommodation”* (FUL/2018/2371) was refused on 16 January 2019 because -
i) *“.....it results in the over-intensification of the use of the property which causes serious detriment to the amenities of neighbouring residents from increased noise and general disturbance. The neighbouring amenities are affected by a large number of unrelated people and their visitors from their comings and goings on foot and by motor vehicles and insufficient on-site car parking provisions.”* and;
ii) *“.....insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that sufficient parking spaces for the development are available and subsequently that the impact on highways and existing parking provisions in the area is acceptable. In such a situation, it is reasonable to consider that the proposal would result in the intensification in demand for on road parking provision in the locality, which would be to the detriment of highway safety, the free flow of traffic and to the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.”*

Relevant Planning Policies and Assessment of the proposal

The site is in a highly sustainable location and, as it is located in an established residential area, the proposed use is considered to be compatible and appropriate.

The proposed development would accord with the overriding principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and with the relevant Policies in the Coventry Local Plan, which was adopted on 6 December 2017.

The NPPF was published in 2018 and clearly states from the outset that ‘at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development’.

Paragraphs 7-11 of the NPPF confirm the presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of the policy requirements in the Coventry Local Plan, the site is located within an established residential area. It is in a highly sustainable location and would comply with the NPPF and the criteria in Policy H3 of the Local Plan, given that the site is located within easy walking distance of Cannon Park District Centre, which includes shops, a gym, a church and local amenities. Cannon Park is pedestrian-friendly with wide, safe, well-lit footpaths connecting the site to the District Centre (which is an 11 minute walk and 4 minute cycle ride away) and to

Warwick University campus (which is a 20 minute walk and 6 minute cycle ride away). There is a bus route around the estate (service 47), which travels along Bransford Avenue and has a bus stop near the site. Lynchgate Road has a number of routes giving regular access to the City Centre and wider area (services 18A, 43, 47, 60, 60A, 87 and 89).

The application is considered to be fully compliant with Local Plan Policy H11 (Homes in Multiple Occupation) as it would have minimal impact on neighbouring properties (given the size of the property and its separation from neighbouring dwellings); provides suitable parking provision; would have minimal visual impact on the appearance or character of the area; would not negatively impact on local services and would provide a high quality environment for future occupiers given the size of the property and its garden.

The applicant considers there is ample precedent for similar conversions of semi-detached properties in the Warwick University catchment area into two 5-bedroom flats. Examples of similar permissions being granted for much smaller properties are at 86 Walsall Street (FUL/2019/0162) and 26 Thimble Road (FUL/2018/2028).

Paragraphs 124-131 of the NPPF encourage good design and aim to ensure development will add to the quality of an area; establish a strong sense of place to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities); optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development; create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

In terms of **design**, Policy DE1 (Ensuring High Quality Design) states that proposals must respect and enhance their surroundings and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area. The application does not propose any external alterations and would retain the character of the existing property.

Cycle storage would be accommodated in an enclosed, purpose-built, secure storage shed in the rear garden. Bin storage would also be accommodated to the rear of the property in a dedicated storage area. The rear garden would be accessible to both flats and the storage areas are not visible from the public domain.

Each flat would have a safe, secure entrance to Old Mill Avenue. The ground floor flat would be accessed from the existing front door and the first floor flat would be accessed from the gated, secure and lit pathway and entrance door to the side of the property. Residents of both flats would have access to the rear garden area and the application would provide a suitable, high quality environment for future occupants.

In terms of the **impact on neighbours**, the application does not propose any significant alterations and would replace a HMO with two 5-bedroom flats, which would be most suitable for students. Any concerns that the proposed use would increase the number of occupants and the level of comings and goings should be balanced against the activity patterns of this substantial property in a large plot being used as a dwelling for a large extended family, which it is clearly capable of. It should also be considered against the recent extant permission for 2 flats with 5-bedrooms which was granted at the site on 28 May 2019 (FUL/2019/0866). Whilst that permission was restricted by condition to a use within Class C3, it is clearly a permission that allows the use of the property by two large family groups with 5 bedrooms.

It would be difficult to demonstrate that the occupants of the proposed flats (Class C4) would be likely to use the property any more intensively than either the extant permission for 2 flats with 5-bedrooms (Class C3) or a large extended family which could occupy the property and, typically, have parents, young children, older children / young adults and grandparents all living at the property, all of whom have different activity patterns and make use of internal and external communal areas at different times of day. The precedent for the property to be occupied by 10 people has clearly been set by the recent permission (FUL/2019/0866) and the applicant does not consider there is any evidence to show that the impact of the proposed 2 flats with 5-bedrooms (Class C4) on neighbouring residents would be noticeably different to the impact of the approved 2 flats with 5-bedrooms (Class C3).

The proposals would, therefore, accord with Policies DE1 and H3 of the Local Plan and any relevant guidelines for New Residential Development.

In respect of **highway safety**, the existing use is a HMO. Policy AC1 (Accessible Transport Network) of the Coventry Local Plan requires development which is expected to generate additional trips to integrate with existing transport networks and Policy AC3 (Demand Management) requires the provision of car parking to be assessed on the basis of the Parking Standards set out in Appendix 5.

These Parking Standards in the City Council's Local Plan would have a maximum requirement of up to 8 car parking spaces and 4 cycle spaces for the two proposed 5-bedroom flats if they are to be used for a purpose within Class C4. There would also be a requirement for 3 parking spaces for the occupants of the adjoining dwelling at 28a Old Mill Avenue.

The large surfaced forecourt to the site is capable of providing 2 car spaces for the occupants of the adjoining dwelling at 28a Old Mill Avenue (which also has a third space in an integral garage) and 5 spaces for the occupants of the two proposed flats at 28 Old Mill Avenue. Secure storage for 8 cycles is proposed in the rear garden, which is accessible to all residents of the property.

Therefore, the application would require 3 additional car parking spaces compared to the existing use as a shared house or small HMO (for up to 6 occupants) to fully meet the Council's Parking Standards.

The application is accompanied by a Parking Survey which concludes that there are significant numbers of on-street parking spaces available and, therefore, the impact of the proposed development on the highway network would be acceptable and not be severe.

The Survey demonstrates that Old Mill Avenue and the nearest sections of Bransford Avenue and De Montfort Way are not heavily parked during the evenings, as neighbouring dwellings all have their own individual on-site parking. Therefore, demand for on-street parking during peak times was very low and the Survey demonstrates that significant amounts of on-street parking were regularly available during the evenings within easy reach of the site, if needed. The Survey shows that between 91% and 99% of the 94 available on-street spaces in the survey area were available and within easy reach of the site, if residents of the proposed development were to choose to keep a car there.

The application proposes 2 flats in an established residential area which is in a highly sustainable location, and where it is not considered that car ownership would be a necessity, given the highly sustainable location and access to local amenities. The applicant does, however, consider

that the nature of the accommodation is such that it would be mostly suitable for students, and it is unlikely that all residents of the proposed development will choose to keep a car at the property, given the highly sustainable location of the site and its close proximity to Warwick University. The University have carried out a recent travel study and this indicated that only 7.8% of undergraduates drive to campus with a further 1.8% as passengers.

Based on figures in the TRICS database for accommodation of this nature in this location, the trip generation for 2 flats is unlikely to exceed three or four vehicular movements per flat per day resulting in a modest total figure of between 6 and 8 movements per day, which is no higher than that generated by a large family dwelling or the existing HMO.

Having regard to the parking demands of the proposed development and the nature and location of the proposed accommodation, it is not considered that a specific management system is required for parking in this development, or that the proposed development generates any requirement for a Residents Parking Zone.

Following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Policy Guidance, development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highways safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be "severe". In this case, the impact of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable.

Therefore, the combination of on-site and on-street parking would be able to fully meet the adopted Parking Standards and not significantly increase the trip generation to the site, it would be in accordance with the NPPF and Policies AC1 and AC3 of the Coventry Local Plan and the impact of the proposed development would be acceptable and would not be severe.

As regards other matters, the site is not located within Flood Zones 2 or 3. The site is not within a Conservation Area or an Archaeological Constraint Area and there are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments in the locality. There are no Tree Preservation Orders on the site, nor is any planting affected by the proposed development.

Conclusion

The application would replace an existing HMO with two 5-bedroom flats (Class C4) and would result in an acceptable standard of accommodation for future occupiers and an acceptable impact on the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties. Sufficient parking for the occupants of 28a Old Mill Avenue and the two proposed flats would be available either on-site or on-street, where a Parking Survey demonstrates there is significant capacity.

The property is located in a highly sustainable location within an established residential area. Therefore, it would accord with the requirements of policies in the Coventry Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework and it is considered that planning permission should be granted.

Kind regards,
Richard Sykes
for Sykes Planning Ltd