

APPLICATION NUMBER: FUL/2019/1945

ADDRESS: 5 Blackthorn Close

PROPOSAL: Conversion to 6 residential units comprising of one cluster flat, one 1-bedroom flat and 4 studios

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to consider the above application

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be **refused** for the reasons outlined in the attached schedule.

DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION SITE

The application site is a detached house located on a small residential Cul-de-Sac within the Cannon Park residential estate. Cannon Park is a low-density suburb comprising of mainly detached family houses with open plan landscaped frontage in a quiet background. The Cannon Park Shopping Centre and Warwick University are nearby and a primary school within walking distance from the application site. On-street parking is restricted in the area. The recent garage conversion has not been carried out as per approved drawings and is under enforcement investigation.

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

The planning application seeks permission to convert the existing dwellinghouse to 6 independent residential units comprising of one 2 bedroomed cluster flat, one, 1 bedroomed flat and four studio flats. The proposed cluster flat would be located on ground floor and it would have communal kitchen and lounge in addition to two bedrooms. The one bedroomed flat and a studio flat would also be on the ground floor but entrance to these units is through the communal lounge and kitchen of the cluster flat. The rest of the three studio flats would be located on the first floor and each of them would have their own kitchen and bathroom. The proposal also includes cycle and refuse bins storage which would be placed in the rear garden but no additional parking spaces are proposed apart from the existing two spaces on the front drive.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Reference	Proposal description	Decision and date
25900	Addition of room at rear of house	approved 21/05/1971
G/C/25900/B	First floor bedroom and bathroom extension	approved 16/02/1981
25900/C	Erection of pitched roof over existing front, side and rear extensions	approved 16/02/2005
HH/2017/0897	Conversion of existing garage to bedroom	approved 30/05/2017

LOCAL PLAN POLICIES

As required by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the proposed development must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Statutory Development Plan for the area relevant to this application site comprises of the Coventry City Council Local Plan 2016. Relevant policies are outlined below.

- Policy DE1 Ensuring High Quality of Design
- Policy H3 Residential Development
- Policy H5 Managing Existing Housing Stock
- Policy AC1 Accessible Transport Network
- Policy AC2 Road Networks
- Policy AC3 Demand Management
- Policy AC4 Walking and Cycling
- Policy DS3 Sustainable Development

Appendix 5 Car and Cycle Parking Standards

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

• Highways (CCC)	No objection subject to cycle storage condition
• Environmental Protection (CCC)	No objection subject to condition to minimise impact on air quality such electric vehicle recharging point

PUBLIC RESPONSES

Neighbour notification was sent out on 23 August 2019 and a site notice was displayed on 30 August 2019 ; 3 objections have been received including one from local ward Councillor, they objected on the following grounds:

- It is a gross overdevelopment of the site with inadequate parking
- Out of character with the family homes surrounding it
- Loss of another family house from Cannon Park
- Would result in an unsightly environment due to uncontrolled bins storage at the front of the property.

ISSUES AND APPRAISAL

Principal of development

Policy H3 of the Coventry Local Plan for new housing 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 within a sustainable location 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. Policy DE1 requires all development proposals to respect and enhance their surroundings

and positively contribute towards the local identity and character of an area, amongst other things.

The development is within a sustainable location, close to Cannon Park shopping Centre with its shops, services and public transport links. The proposed conversion would remain residential which would be compatible with the surrounding residential use. Therefore, the principle of the development would be acceptable subject to the proposed subdivision of the dwellinghouse creating a satisfactory residential environment and not having detrimental impact on the identity and general character of the area and the neighbouring amenities.

I consider that the proposed conversion of a single family dwellinghouse into 6 independent units would be a significant intensification of the existing property and the site itself. I note that the floor plans show that each flat including one bedroomed flat would be single occupancy unit including each bedroom of the two-bedroomed cluster flat. However, the proposed residential units fall within use class C3, and therefore it is considered restricting the occupancy level by condition would not be reasonable nor would it be enforceable. In such a situation, the proposed 6 residential units would be capable of accommodating at least 14 people. This level of intensification is considered wholly unacceptable and incompatible within this low-density residential area where detached houses sit on a generous plots within a well landscaped setting. In addition, it is likely that the tenure of the 6 new units would be different to each other and as a result there is a high potential of inconvenience and nuisance that would occur to the occupiers of the residential units due to differing in lifestyle and tenure of the residents. In particular, the proposed one bedroomed flat and studio flat 1 do not have independent access and the residents of these two units must go through the communal kitchen and lounge room which is part of the cluster flat. This arrangement appears sub-standard in the creation of quality residential environment. I do not consider this matter can be resolved by a suitably worded condition.

Policy H5 provides guidance on managing existing housing stock. It advises stating that the existing housing stock will be renovated and improved, in association with the enhancement of the surrounding residential environment and to meet local housing needs. Policy H5 goes on stating that redevelopment schemes will be considered where the existing housing does not meet local housing market needs or is in a very poor state of repair. The NPPF in paragraph 127 states that the planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area and establish or maintain a strong sense of place.

It is acknowledged that there would be no visual harm from the proposed conversion due to the fact that there are no external alterations to the dwellinghouse; however, the conversion would inevitably increase the density of the occupation of the house. This would not only result in a significant increase in the movement and activity of people but also the pattern of this movement and activity would be different to what might be expected in a family home. I consider the changes are materially different to the movement and activities which are involved with single dwellinghouses and in particular in comparison to the family housing character of the area. I have given regard to Policy H5 and do not consider the Cannon Park Estate is in a poor state which requires regeneration. The existing dwellinghouse appears in good condition and well maintained, nevertheless, the house is located within a very desirable residential area of the city and I am not aware that the existing housing does not meet local housing market needs for the area. There is no evidence that the proposal would contribute towards the enhancement of the surrounding residential environment. Rather I consider the proposal would bring avoidable pressure to the

immediate neighbourhood from a significantly intensified use, in particular from increased comings and goings, additional vehicular movements especially where onsite parking is limited as well as restriction on street parking.

Therefore, I consider the proposed 6 residential units from a single dwellinghouse would have a detrimental impact on the character of the area. I consider that the proposal conflicts with the Coventry Local Plan Policies H3, DE1 and H5 and fails to accord with the character, sense of place and local distinctiveness objectives of the NPPF.

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 NPPF encourages securing high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants and emphasises on quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. In terms of built form the proposal does not involve any alterations to the dwellinghouse apart from cycle and bin storage which would be located in the rear garden. Therefore, the proposal would not result in any adverse impact in terms of loss of light, outlook and overlooking. However, it is apparent, that the conversion of the property into six households would result in an over-intensification of use which would create noise and disturbance above the level reasonably associated to the occupation of the property as a single-family home. The use of a property as six individual residential units would be very different to that of a family house and the general level of activity associated with six units. Despite there being uncontrolled houses in multiple occupation (HIMO) (within use class C4, under permitted development rights) and a small number of HIMO properties (sui generis) in the area, the general character of the area is family housing in a quiet residential environment. The converted property would be much more intensively used with the associated comings and goings and disturbance from a minimum of seven unrelated residents, and potentially up to 14, rather than a single-family unit. The impact and the associated disturbance would be to the detriment of the amenities and quiet enjoyment that adjoining neighbours may reasonably be expected to enjoy.

Cycle storage should be both secure and covered to enable occupiers to safely store their bikes. The cycle store is located in the rear garden and a condition can be applied to secure this element within an appropriate design solution. Bin storage is also located within the rear garden and an appropriate condition could ensure the bins are stored within the storage area at all times unless on bin collection day. This condition would minimise the adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area which could have resulted from bins left at the front.

Highways issues

The dwellinghouse has two on-site parking spaces and this arrangement remains the same for the proposed 6 units. I have some concerns in this regard due to the lack of on-site parking as well as restrictions on on-street parking on Blackthorn Close and neighbouring streets; this arrangement could result in overspill parking on the landscaped area or on neighbouring driveways, in particular during the restricted hours (i.e. 10am – 11am and 2pm – 3pm on weekdays). Subsequently this could affect the neighbouring amenities as well as the general character of the area. However, given the site is located within a sustainable location and highways do not raise any objection, I consider that the refusal of this application on parking and highways ground would not be sustainable; although, the existing on-site parking spaces are far lower than the required parking spaces for 6 independent residential flats (6 one bedroom and 1 two bedroom) which is 8 as per the Appendix 5 of Coventry Local Plan 2016 for Car and Cycle Parking for New Development.

Equality Implications

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:-

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Officers have taken this into account and given due regard to this statutory duty, and the matters specified in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in the determination of this application.

There are no known equality implications arising directly from this development

CONCLUSION

I therefore recommend that permission be refused.