

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 14th MAY 2014

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MANAGER

FOR APPROVAL OF PLANNING PERMISSION

APPLICATION NO: 140364
PROPOSAL: CONVERSION AND CHANGE OF USE FROM PART D1/B1 TO HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION FOR YMCA (SUI GENERIS USE). EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO FAÇADE, RECONFIGURATION OF MANSARD ROOF AND ERECTION OF AN ADDITIONAL LEVEL TO FORM 5 STOREY BUILDING.
LOCATION: MIDLAND HOUSE, 41 KING STREET
APPLICANT: MR D KOHLER
WARDS AFFECTED: SOUTH

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE

1. Subject to the conditions set out below:

- (01) The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.**

Reason: To limit the duration of the permission in accordance with the provisions of Sections 91-96 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990.

- (02) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out other than in complete accordance with the approved plans and specifications as set out on Luton Borough Council plan numbers 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08,09 10 and 11.**

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and to safeguard the amenities of the surrounding area. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1, ENV8, ENV9 and CA1 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (03) A management plan, including management responsibilities and maintenance schedules, for all internal and external and shared/common areas of the development, to include**

responsibilities for the control and management of noise within all shared common areas and for the supervision of the students, shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the student accommodation. The Management Plan shall be implemented and maintained in full in perpetuity.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and to safeguard the amenities of the surrounding area. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1, ENV9 and ENV10 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (04) The hostel accommodation hereby approved shall only be occupied by persons between the ages of 16 - 30 registered as homeless within Luton and in need of support services.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise control over the future use of the accommodation. To accord with the objectives of Policy LP1 of the Luton Local Plan and the NPPF.

- (05) Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, a scheme to provide site security shall be installed in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme as approved shall be implemented in full and retained and maintained thereafter for so long as the development remains in existence.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and in the interests of security and the prevention of crime. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1, ENV9 and CA1 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (06) Before the residential hostel accommodation building is used for any purpose it shall be insulated against internally generated noise in accordance with a scheme to be approved by the Local Planning Authority before any development is commenced.

Reason: To protect the amenities both of neighbouring properties and also of the future residents of the residential accommodation hereby approved. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and CA1 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (07) Full details of the materials to be used in the construction of the walls and roofing of the development shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to review the matter at the end of the limited period having regard to current policy, any current proposals for the development of the site, and to the impact of the approved use of premises on the surrounding area. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1, ENV8 and ENV9 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (08) Full details of a scheme for the secure parking of 16 bicycles on the site and any associated structures shall be submitted to and approved by the LPA, and the scheme thereby approved shall be fully implemented prior to the first occupation of the premises commences.**

Reason: To ensure adequate provision is made for the accommodation of bicycles on the site. Policies LP1, T3 and CA1 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (09) No means of external broadcasting of amplified sound or music shall be used on the site at any time.**

Reason: To protect the amenities of neighbouring properties. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 and CA1 of the Luton Local Plan.

- (10) Full details of the proposed dustbin/enclosed refuse collection area shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and shall be installed prior to the occupation of any part of the accommodation hereby approved.**

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of development and to safeguard the amenities of the surrounding area. To accord with the objectives of Policy(ies) LP1 of the Luton Local Plan.

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

2. The application site is a rectangular shaped area of land located on a rising gradient and comprises a three storey “L” shaped building in red brick. This 1960s building has its frontage in King Street, with a return frontage on Stuart Street. There is a gated entrance leading to the rear car park area which is located adjacent to the north-eastern elevation.
3. Permission is sought to change the use of the office block to residential hostel accommodation for the YMCA Bedfordshire, which is a Christian charity seeking to serve the community through its extensive supported accommodation and resettlement work.

4. In accordance with its Christian values, the YMCA stands for a worldwide fellowship based on the equal value of all persons and respect and freedom for all, tolerance and understanding between people of different opinions. Above all it welcomes into its fellowship persons of all religious faiths and none.
5. The YMCA Bedfordshire has been working with young people since 1991 and now offers 88 supported housing units part-funded through Bedford Borough Council's Supporting People programme at three central Bedford locations. It is proposed that a similar relationship will be established with service providers in Luton.
6. Pre-application discussions have been undertaken with the planning and housing departments establishing the unmet housing needs of young homeless people in Luton, as well as developing a sensitive design rationale for the building having regard to its setting within the Central Conservation Area.
7. In order to understand how the Luton hostel would operate, visits were made to a number of supported accommodation projects in Bedford. Weaver House, has been set up for men and women aged 18-30 year old with support needs, Cornerstone House provides accommodation for young single vulnerable homeless males and females aged 16-19, and The Foyer which provides supported accommodation and training to young people in housing need, aged 16 -24.
8. The application is being considered by Committee due to the area of the land and buildings exceeding 1,000 sqm.

LUTON LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATION

9. Central Area and Town Centre Conservation Area

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

10. The NPPF identifies a set of core land use planning principles which should underpin both plan-making and decision making. These 12 principles include that planning should seek to secure a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
11. Paragraphs 214 and 215 of the NPPF make clear that where a local authority does not possess a development plan adopted since 2004, due weight may only be given to relevant policies in existing plans according to their degree of conformity with the NPPF. Moreover, the Government has also released further Planning Practice Guidance.

12. In this instance, the relevant Local Plan policies possess a good degree of conformity with the requirements of both the NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance. As such, considerable weight may still be given to the requirements of Policies LP1, ENV8, ENV9, CA1 and T3 of the Luton Local Plan.
13. The Luton Local Plan was adopted in 2006 and therefore remains the starting point for the assessment of this proposal.

Luton Local Plan 2001-2011

14. Policy LP1 supports development which maximises an opportunity to improve the quality of life of residents and visitors, using land, buildings and materials efficiently and which does not disadvantage any part of the community by virtue of gender, sexuality, race, colour, disability or age.
15. Policy ENV8 seeks development which will preserve or enhance the character of an conservation area.
16. Policy ENV9 ensures that development will respect the scale and proportion of existing building within the streetscene and are designed to provide a safe and secure environment.
17. Policy T3 -relates to traffic implications of development which will be permitted provided that it does not exacerbate road congestion, cause safety problems for pedestrians or cause harm to the environment.
18. Policy CA1 – permits development within the Central Area which contributes to enhancing its role as a mixed use area in which to live, work, shop and play.

PREVIOUS HISTORY

19. The site has received planning permission for a number of applications regarding a change of use. In 2013 planning consent was approved for a student Halls of Residence. In 2010 and 2011 the ground, 2nd and 3rd floors received permission for a non-residential institution (D1) use. In 2005, planning approval was received for 27 No1 bedroom flats and in 2004 a 73 bedroom hotel was approved.

THE PROPOSAL

20. This proposal will involve the refurbishment and reconfiguration of the existing floors from basement to second floor. In addition, the third floor, mansard roof will be removed and replaced with better functional space, as well as the creation of a fourth floor, resulting in a five storey building.

TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS

21. Conservation – No comments received. Any comments made will be reported at the meeting.
22. Highway Engineering – No comments received. Any comments made will be reported at the meeting.
23. Environmental Protection – No objection.
24. Statutory Publicity - The application has been notified to 13 adjoining occupiers with a site notice and press notice. No comments have been received.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

25. The principle of residential accommodation operating from this site was established with the granting of planning permission for flats and student accommodation in 2004 and 2013 respectively. The material planning considerations therefore relate to the impact of the change of use on the character of the Conservation Area, amenity of adjoining occupiers, living environment created and parking.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA

26. When considering proposals affecting the Central Area and Town Centre Conservation Area, development will be required to preserve or where appropriate enhance the character and appearance of the area as well as contributing to its role as a mixed use area.
27. This part of the Central Conservation Area benefits from a significant number of Georgian buildings alongside the more contemporary circa 1960s buildings, No 41 being no exception. As the planning history indicates, a number of planning permissions have been approved for other uses, the last of which related to a student Halls of Residence. This proposal will offer temporary accommodation for young homeless local people within a structured and managed environment by a reputable organisation. As such in terms of Central Area policy this proposal will contribute to its role as a mixed use area in which to live, work and play.
28. As well as changing the use of the site, part of the proposal involves the reconfiguration of the mansard roof and the creation of an additional floor. These two floors will be set back from both frontages in King Street and Stuart Street resulting in a degree of subordination which will lend the building a degree of depth and character. The exterior of the building will also receive a significant refurbishment.
29. In terms of the scale and context, and its relationship with neighbouring properties, there are a number of buildings in the immediate proximity

that already exceed 5 storeys in height, namely the Icon Hotel, the Premier Inn, Banantyne Gym at 6 storeys with car park, all of which are opposite the site to the south-east.

30. Immediately abutting the site to the north-east is a terrace of 3 storey Georgian buildings which have deeply recessed windows providing a strong horizontal emphasis to the streetscene. Adjoining the site to the south-east is a two storey Georgian building, which is part rendered and part brown facing brick. The Luton Registry Office, also dating from the same period is immediately to the rear of the site. On the north-western side of King Street the prevailing pattern of development is also a mix of Georgian and 1960s architecture, with a similarly designed red brick 3.5 storey office building which anchors the opposite corner of the junction with Stuart Street.
31. Due to the diverse range in scale and context of buildings found in this locality the proposal would not be out of context and would afford the opportunity to enhance this part of the Central Area.

IMPACT ON ADJOINING OCCUPIERS

32. The prevailing character of adjoining development in King Street and George Street West is primarily commercial in nature and as no concerns have been raised during successive planning approvals, no further issues have been identified.

LIVING ENVIRONMENT CREATED

33. The new facilities will provide No78 supported housing units. No72 will be shared units, comprising two resident rooms sharing a communal kitchen and bathroom and the remaining No6 being one bedroom flats. The 72 shared units will be located on the first, second and third floors (24 each floor). The remaining No6 flats will be located on the fourth floor. Room sizes are all of an acceptable standard with a good degree of sunlight/daylight penetration.
34. The ground floor will provide a new secure entrance from King Street as well as providing circulation areas and office space for support workers. In addition there will be a number of on-site facilities located between the basement and ground floors including a laundry, gymnasium, faith room, internet cafe and residents' recreation/common room as well as plant room.
35. The site does not benefit from any external landscaped areas and therefore there will be no access to open space. However, the Town Centre has a number of public open spaces and both Wardown Park and the Manor Recreation grounds are within walking distance. Moreover, a good degree of recreational facilities are provided in-house.

36. It is considered the living environment provided by this accommodation will create a safe and secure environment for vulnerable young people.

DESIGN

37. The design rationale for the site has been influenced by the requirement for an iconic landmark building. This scheme has therefore been formed by having regard to the general perception that some hostels are often synonymous with accommodation of poor quality and therefore of a low standard.
38. The facade of building will be altered by using a combination of the existing brickwork on the lower levels, with white or off white render applied to the upper levels of the existing elevations. A lightweight metal cladding is proposed on the upper levels which will create the feature window surrounds.
39. The design rationale has had regard to the prevailing character of development within this part of the town which favours brickwork and render with a contemporary finish.

PARKING

40. The site benefits from some parking located to the rear of the site which will serve approximately 15 cars, two of which are allocated for disabled drivers and this will be utilised primarily by staff and visitors. Moreover, due to its sustainable location the proposal is within easy walking distance of the railway station and good bus connections.

CONCLUSIONS

41. The proposal will provide much needed supported temporary accommodation for young vulnerable people living within the borough. The living environment is well appointed, safe, secure and well managed, in addition to providing training opportunities and support. There will be no detrimental impact on the amenities of the adjoining occupiers.
42. The external alterations proposed will enhance the building and its relationship within the locality promoting its mixed use role as an area in which to live, work and play. As such it is considered that the proposal complies with both national and local policy and on this basis it is recommended for approval subject to the conditions set out above.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D

43. Luton Local Plan 2001–2011
44. The National Planning Policy Framework (The NPPF)
45. Planning Practice Guidance