

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 19/12/2016
REPORT OF THE SENIOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICE MANAGER	CAERNARFON

Number: 7

Application Number: C16/1306/11/LL

Date Registered: 19/10/2016

Application Type: Full - Planning

Community: Bangor

Ward: Deiniol

Proposal: CHANGE OF USE FROM OFFICES ON THE FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SEVEN LIVING UNITS

Location: 205-207 STRYD FAWR/HIGH STREET, BANGOR, GWYNEDD, LL57 1NY

Summary of the Recommendation:

TO APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

- 1.1 This proposal is to change use from offices that are located on the first, second and third floors in order to create seven self-contained flats. The proposal means making internal alterations to provide seven self-contained living units; six 1-bedroom units on the first and second floors and one 2-bedroom unit over the third floor. The proposal also involves creating pitched roof dormer windows in the roof. The proposal retains the use as a shop on the ground floor which faces the High Street.
- 1.2 The building is located at the end of a terrace which forms part of the High Street in Bangor and the side elevation faces a seating area in front of the Cathedral. This means that the building is characteristic due to its location and its 'corner' form which provides a shop-front on the front and side elevations. The property is located within the Bangor Conservation Area and a terrace of houses is located directly behind the building which is grade II listed and the Cathedral, which is located a mere 20m away from the site, is grade I listed. The property is also located within a defined Town Centre and designated Main Shopping Area of the City of Bangor.

2. Relevant Policies:

- 2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Unitary Development Plan.
- 2.2 Under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Council has a duty not only to carry out sustainable development, but also to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or well-being) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act; in making the recommendation the Council has sought to ensure that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is considered that there would be no significant or unacceptable impact upon the achievement of well-being objectives as a result of the proposed recommendation.
- 2.3 **Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan 2009:**

POLICY B3 – DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

Ensure that proposals have no effect on the setting of Listed Buildings and that they conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the special character of the Listed Building and the local environment.

POLICY B4 – DEVELOPMENTS IN OR AFFECTING THE SETTING OF CONSERVATION AREAS

Ensure that proposals within conservation areas, or proposals that affect their setting, are refused unless they aim to maintain or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and its setting.

POLICY B22 - BUILDING DESIGN

Promote good building design by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and character of the local landscape and environment.

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POLICY B23 - AMENITIES

Safeguard the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and amenities of the local area.

POLICY B24 - ALTERATIONS AND BUILDING EXTENSIONS WITHIN DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES, RURAL VILLAGES AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

Ensure that proposals for alterations or extensions to buildings conform to a series of criteria aimed at protecting the character and amenity value of the local area.

POLICY B25 - BUILDING MATERIALS

Safeguard the visual character by ensuring that building materials are of a high standard and are in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area.

POLICY C1 - LOCATING NEW DEVELOPMENT

Land within the development boundaries of towns and villages and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. New buildings, structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside will be refused with the exception of a development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan.

POLICY C4 – ADAPTING BUILDINGS FOR RE-USE

Proposals to adapt buildings for re-use rather than demolition will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the suitability of the building, visual considerations, design and the impact on the vitality of neighbouring towns and villages.

POLICY CH15 – CONVERTING FLOORS ABOVE SHOPS AND RETAIL UNITS INTO FLATS OR RESIDENTIAL UNITS

Approve proposals to convert and use floors above shops and other retail units for residential use (where planning permission is needed).

POLICY CH33 - SAFETY ON ROADS AND STREETS

Development proposals will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures.

The Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan which is currently being prepared is subject to an ongoing Public Examination. At present, it is not a relevant planning consideration for determining planning applications.

2.4 National Policies:

Planning Policy Wales 2016 (Version 9)

NCT 12: Design

The Welsh Office Circular 61/96 "Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas"

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3. Relevant Planning History:

- 3.1 C13/0912/11/LL - Application for the change of use of the current ground floor and basement of shop (a1) to café/bar (a3) together with external alterations. Refused 17.10.2013
- 3.2 C07A/0646/11/LL Adapt the first floor, second floor and third floor to three flats - approved 16.10.2007

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Not received

Transportation Unit: I confirm that I have no objection to the proposal.

The building is in a central location within the city, close to a number of local facilities and within a reasonable distance of regular public transport services and several car parks. It is therefore presumed that the proposal will be no worse than the existing use as offices and is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the local roads network.

Welsh Water: No objection, need surface water condition.

Public Consultation: A notice was posted on the site and nearby residents were notified. The consultation period has come to an end and no correspondence was received.

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

- 5.1 Policy C1 of the Unitary Development Plan refers to the location of new developments, and states that land within town and village development boundaries and the developed form of rural villages will be the main focus for new developments. New buildings, structures and ancillary facilities in the countryside will be refused with the exception of a development that is permitted by another policy of the Plan. In this case, the proposal entails the conversion of an existing building situated within the development boundary of Bangor city regional centre and therefore the proposal conforms to this specific policy.
- 5.2 Policy C4 of the Unitary Development Plan involves adapting buildings for re-use, and states that policies to adapt buildings for re-use will be approved provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the suitability of the building, visual considerations, design and the impact on the vitality of neighbouring towns and villages. It is considered that the existing building is suitable for this proposed residential use and that the external adaptations are acceptable. It is therefore considered that it still respects the structure, form and character of the original building and its surroundings and that it retains the inherent traditional features. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with all the requirements of policy C4 above.

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- 5.3 Policy CH15 of the Unitary Development Plan deals with converting floors above shops and retail units into flats and it approves proposals to do so. The policy recognises that floors above shops can offer an opportunity to provide homes for some groups of the community and is also a way of ensuring mixed use and brings vitality to the area. The floors above the shop were used as offices and storerooms and it is considered that the proposal to convert the higher floors complies entirely with the requirements of policy CH15.

Visual amenities

- 5.4 The application site is located in a prominent location within the Conservation Area and also close to a number of listed buildings including the Cathedral which is a Grade I Listed building. Policies B3 and B4 protect the settings of listed buildings and conservation areas. Also, section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to give particular attention to the fact that it is desirable to retain or improve the character or appearance of conservation areas. Policies B22, B23, B24 and B25 are also relevant and involve design, materials and protecting visual amenities.
- 5.5 The proposal involves installing six new pitch roof dormer windows in the roof of the building to reflect the existing dormer window in the roof together with carrying out maintenance work on the building. The original plans received also sought the right to remove the building's chimney in order to facilitate the internal work to provide the living units. Amended plans were received in response to officers' concerns regarding this aspect of the application because the policies protect traditional features in conservation areas and also such features contribute in a positive way to the character of conservation areas.
- 5.6 The application site is already empty and in a dilapidated condition which does not contribute in a positive way to the street-scene or the conservation area. Paragraph 22 of Circular 61/96 recognises that reusing higher floors which are empty specifically for residential purposes not only provides an additional income and assurance for the shop owner, but also helps to ensure that buildings which are often important to the townscape are kept in a good condition.
- 5.7 From this perspective, it is not considered that the proposal would have an impact on, or cause substantial damage to, the setting of the Conservation Area or the architectural or historic character of listed buildings. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with Policies B3, B4, B22, B23, B24 and B25 of the GUDP.

General and residential amenities

- 5.8 Policy B23 of the Unitary Development Plan safeguards the amenities of the local neighbourhood by ensuring that proposals must conform to a series of criteria aimed at safeguarding the recognised features and amenities of the local area.
- 5.9 Commercial use will continue within the building as the shop will be kept on the ground floor and seven self-contained living units will be provided on the floors above. The site is located within the city centre with a mix of shops and A3 uses (food and drink), also there are residential flats above business units as well as residential houses near the site which is characteristic of city centres. It is not considered that the proposal would have any negative impact in respect of general and residential amenities due to the existing use of the site and surrounding area.

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Therefore, it is considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy B23 above.

Transport and access matters

5.10 Policy CH33 of the Unitary Development Plan relates to ensuring safety on roads and streets, and it permits development proposals provided they can conform to specific criteria relating to the vehicular entrance, the standard of the existing roads network and traffic calming measures. The proposal does not provide any additional parking spaces as part of the development; however, the Transportation Unit did not have any objection to the proposal due to the previous use of the site and its central location and its proximity to public car parks. It is considered that the proposal complies with all the requirements of policy CH33 of the Unitary Development Plan.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 This site is located within the development boundaries of the city of Bangor as designated in the GUDP and policy CH15 approves applications to convert floors above shops and commercial units into flats. It is not considered that the external alterations would be damaging to the existing building or the setting of the conservation area or the nearby listed buildings either. It is considered that ensuring new use for the building could contribute in a positive way to the appearance and character of the building and the surrounding area.

6.2 In light of the above, and having given full consideration to all relevant planning matters and the submitted observations, it is considered that this proposal is acceptable and that it complies with the requirements of local and national policies and guidance.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 To approve – conditions

1. Time
2. In accordance with the plans
3. Materials