



## Report to West Area Planning Committee

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| <b>Application Number:</b>              | 21/08599/FUL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Proposal:</b>                        | Construction of part single, part two storey side extensions to both elevations of Stuart Lodge, conversion of integral garage and other associated internal alterations in connection with change of use of existing building to from offices (use class E) to residential (use class C3) comprising 3 x 2-bed flats and 2 x studio flats (5 in total) |
| <b>Site Location:</b>                   | Stuart Lodge<br>Stuart Road<br>High Wycombe<br>Buckinghamshire<br>HP13 6AG                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Applicant:</b>                       | Ms Manni Chopra - Chopra Property Group Limited                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Case Officer:</b>                    | Heather Smith                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Ward(s) affected:</b>                | Ryemead & Micklefield                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Parish-Town Council:</b>             | High Wycombe Town Unparished                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Date valid application received:</b> | 28th January 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Statutory determination date:</b>    | 25th March 2022                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Recommendation</b>                   | Refusal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

### 1.0 Summary & Recommendation/ Reason for Planning Committee Consideration

- 1.1 Full planning permission is sought for the construction of part single, part two storey side extensions to both elevations of Stuart Lodge, conversion of integral garage and other associated internal alterations in connection with change of use of existing building to from offices (use class E) to residential (use class C3) comprising 3 x 2-bed flats and 2 x studio flats (5 in total).
- 1.2 This proposal fails to conserve and enhance the character of the surrounding Conservation Area and would detract from the visual amenity of the street scene.
- 1.3 This proposal will have no adverse effect upon the amenities of adjacent residential properties and would provide a good standard of accommodation for future occupiers.
- 1.4 This proposal will have no adverse effect upon highway safety or the convenience of other road users in the local area
- 1.5 This proposal will have no adverse effect upon flooding, the environment or ecology.

1.6 Cllr Baughan, Cllr Knight and Cllr Rana have called this application in for consideration by committee on the grounds that the proposed development is within the conservation area and does not demonstrate any sensitivity to this and neighbouring listed building. Furthermore, it also seems that the plans around parking are inadequate and unrealistic.

1.7 Recommendation – refusal.

## 2.0 Description of Proposed Development

2.1 Stuart Lodge is an existing, unlisted three storey building, situated on the western side of Stuart Road. The application site is situated within the High Wycombe (Town Centre Conservation Area

2.2 At present, the application premises is in use as offices and as a Quaker Meeting House.

2.3 The application is accompanied by :

- a) Design, Access and Heritage Statement
- b) Parking Statement
- c) Ecology and Trees Checklist.

## 3.0 Relevant Planning History

| Reference      | Development                                                                                                                                  | Decision | Decision Date     |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| HW/442/66      | Change of use to offices                                                                                                                     | PER      | 24 June 1966      |
| HW/6161/69     | Erection of extension                                                                                                                        |          | 7 August 1969     |
| 91/05847/FUL   | ERECTION OF NEW GARAGE,<br>RETAINING EXISTING EXTERNAL<br>WALL AND REAR PARTY WALL                                                           | PER      | 11 June 1991      |
| 21/07300/PNP30 | Change of use of existing<br>building from offices (use class<br>B1(a)) to create 4 x studio<br>apartments (use class C3<br>(dwellinghouses) | DAPP     | 21 September 2021 |

## 4.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

### Principle and Location of Development

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP1 (Sustainable Development), CP3 (Settlement Strategy), CP4 (Delivering Homes), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)

DSA: DM1 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development), DM6 (Mixed-use development).

4.1 The application site lies within the High Wycombe Settlement Area. As such the extension of properties and the provision of additional residential accommodation is acceptable, in principle.

### **Affordable Housing and Housing Mix**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM22 (Housing Mix), DM24 (Affordable Housing), DM41 (Optional Technical Standards for Building Regulations Approval) Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (POSPD).

- 4.2 This proposal falls below the Council's requirements for affordable housing.
- 4.3 With regard to the provision of flats, the application property benefits from the approval of a Prior Notification application for the conversion of the existing offices to 4 x residential studio apartments.

### **Employment issues**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP5 (Delivering Land for Business), DM28 (Employment Areas)

DSA: DM5 (Scattered business sites)

- 4.4 Although this proposal will result in the loss of an existing employment facility (offices) the change of use to residential has been established under the approval of Prior Notification application 21/07300/PNP30.

### **Transport matters and parking**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM33 (Managing Carbon Emissions, Transport and Energy Generation)

DSA: DM2 (Transport requirements of development sites)

- 4.5 Stuart Road is an unclassified road subject to a 30mph speed restriction. There are waiting restrictions in force on Stuart Road. In the vicinity of the site, these take the form of double yellow lines, single yellow lines ('No Parking from Monday to Saturday between the hours of 8am and 6pm') and residents and pay-and-display parking bays (designated for that purpose between the hours of 9am and 5pm, from Monday to Saturday).
- 4.6 In terms of trip generation, in order for Highways Development Management to meet legislative requirements when assessing this site, it is necessary to consider and to take into account the maximum levels of movement and occupation associated with the sites existing lawful use. The Highway Authority has assessed this against the proposals as presented by the applicant. Current and/or historic levels of use and movement are not necessarily reflective of the lawful potential of the site should a different occupier be present.
- 4.7 Having interrogated the Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS®) database, the historical/lawful use of the site as an office has the potential to generate approximately 76(no) two-way vehicle movements per day. Each residential unit in this location would be expected to generate approximately 2 – 4 two-way vehicle movements per day. The proposed residential units sought would generate fewer vehicle movements when compared to the sites existing lawful use.
- 4.8 In terms of parking, the site is located in Non-residential Zone 1 as set out in the Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking Guidance (BCPG). In accordance with the BCPG, an office in this location should be provided with 1(no) parking space per 25sqm of floorspace. Therefore, the existing 226sqm of floorspace has a parking requirement of 10(no) parking spaces. The site is located in Residential Zone A. Each of the proposed residential units features 1-4 habitable rooms and therefore require 1(no) parking space each.

- 4.9 The submitted plans demarcate 4(no) parking spaces, although additional parking could be accommodated in a tandem arrangement. Whilst the proposed development would result in a loss of a parking space in the garage, the site would retain a similar level of hardstanding parking area. Given that the proposal to provide 5 residential units would reduce the sites parking requirement, the development would not displace additional parking onto the public highway. Furthermore, the site is located within a reasonable walking distance of public transport options and daily amenities reducing future residents' reliance on private motor vehicles.
- 4.10 Finally, in consideration that the garage is being converted to habitable accommodation and that the area is no longer being used for parking, the access serving the garage must be stopped up as part of the application. This is of benefit to highway safety given the accesses location in proximity to the 90<sup>o</sup> bend in the road. This can be secured by way of condition.
- 4.11 In light of the above, the Highway Authority raises no objections to this application, subject to a condition requiring the closure of the existing access.

**Raising the quality of place making and design and the impact of the proposal on the High Wycombe (Town) Conservation Area.**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place); CP11 (Historic Environment); DM31 (Development Affecting the Historic Environment); DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development); DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)

DSA: DM11 (Green networks and infrastructure), DM16 (Open space in new development)  
Housing intensification SPD

- 4.12 The application property is a non-designated heritage asset, within the High Wycombe Conservation Area. The property is also identified in the High Wycombe Conservation Area as a "Building of Interest."
- 4.13 The existing building has a single storey attached garage to the right hand side, with a single storey extension, to the left hand side. The southern part of the site is currently open space which is used for parking. The building itself benefits from feature detailing, including a brick on edge banding detail, details around the window openings and brick head detailing.
- 4.14 The submitted plans show that the existing single storey elevation on the southern side will be demolished and a new two storey side extension erected in its place. On the northern elevation, a new 1<sup>st</sup> floor side extension is to be erected above the existing single garage structure, together with roof alterations.
- 4.15 The Council's Conservation Officer has reviewed these proposals and has raised a number of objections to the form, massing and design of the extensions.
- 4.16 In particular, the form and massing of the proposed roof and the proposed bulk of the side elevation facing the parking area will appear incongruous on the existing building and within the street scene. Crown roofs are not a traditional feature of Victorian villa buildings and demonstrates that the bulk of this extension is excessive and represents an overdevelopment of the site.
- 4.17 Furthermore, the proposed pair of dormer windows on the side elevation facing the parking area would create a cluttered roof scape and there is a lack of symmetry in the

window openings. The opposite gable elevation also has a mismatch of window designs.

- 4.18 On balance, the proposed extensions to the existing traditional building are considered to be unsympathetic and harmful to the appearance and character of the host structure. Furthermore, the proposed extensions would be prominent within the street scene and as such would detract from the character and appearance of the High Wycombe Conservation Area.
- 4.19 Policy DM31 states that “where a development would lead to less than substantial to the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent will be refused unless this harm is outweighed by public benefits of the proposal, including securing optimum viable use.” This stance follows the advice contained in Paragraph 202 of the NPPF.
- 4.20 In this instance, no public benefit is apparent from this development, and the premises already benefits from a viable change of use to residential purposes.
- 4.21 It is therefore considered that this proposal fails to accord with Policies CP11 (Historic Environment) DM31 (Development Affecting the Historic Environment) and DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality of the adopted Wycombe District Local Plan."
- 4.22 The Conservation Officer has also raised concerns regarding how this proposal could execute the quality of the brickwork detailing. However, such details could be controlled by strict planning conditions.
- 4.23 With regard to boundary treatments, enclosure to the street scene should be provided. Such enclosure should involve a traditional boundary treatment, such as railings and brick piers. Again, a planning condition requiring boundary treatments to be approved prior to installation should be imposed on any subsequent planning application.
- 4.24 With regard to the adjacent listed properties at No 25 and 27 London Road, although this proposal will have an adverse effect upon the character of the surrounding Conservation Area, the Conservation Officer has not supported an objection in relation to the setting of these listed structures.

#### **Amenity of existing and future residents**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality), DM40 (Internal space standards)

Housing intensification SPD

- 4.25 This proposal would result in an acceptable standard of accommodation for future residents. It is unfortunate that the proposed units will not provide any outdoor private amenity space. However, the change of use of this property to residential purposes has been established under a Prior Notification application, where the provision of private amenity space is not required. This current proposal will only add 1 additional unit to the scheme already approved.
- 4.26 The submitted plans do show that a habitable room window will be installed in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the southern elevation, overlooking the parking area. Concern has been raised by the resident warden (Cllr Julia Wassell) of the adjacent Quaker Meeting House, at 25 London Road, that the proposed extensions will overlook the private rear rooms and private rear garden at this facility. The facility is a well-used community facility and is used for counselling, mental health, the NHS and Local Authority. The Warden states

that the facility is a calm and tranquil environment which will be impacted by this development.

- 4.27 Other residents in London Road have expressed concern that the distance between the proposed extension and adjacent properties in London Road is less than 25m. Therefore overlooking and a loss of privacy will occur.
- 4.28 The submitted plans do show that a distance of 10m will be retained between the proposed southern extension and its shared boundary with 25 London Road. The main property at No 25 is set more than 15m from the shared boundary. However, a single storey outbuilding and a private rear garden area are situated immediately adjacent to the boundary. The proposed single 1<sup>st</sup> floor window will result in a degree of overlooking to No. 25, however, a first floor window already exists in the southern elevation of Stuart Lodge. Although the proposed 1<sup>st</sup> floor window will be closer to the boundary, it is considered that the level of overlooking and any loss of privacy will not be significantly greater than what may occur at present.
- 4.29 With regard to other adjacent properties, it is considered that this proposal will not result in any significant loss of light, privacy or outlook.
- 4.30 Concerns have been raised by adjacent residents, that the proposed development does not provide sufficient parking for 5 units, in accordance with the current parking standards and that the displacement parking will occupy spaces current used by existing residents.
- 4.31 The submitted plans do show that only 4 spaces will be provided for 5 units. However, when considering parking displacement, the Highway Authority have taken into account the current authorised use of the property as offices. The office use itself has a greater displacement of parking than the proposed 5 residential units. As such, an objection on the grounds of a loss of on street parking for existing residents could not be sustained.

#### **Environmental issues**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP7 (Delivering the infrastructure to support growth), DM20 (Matters to be determined in accordance with the NPPF)

- 4.32 In accordance with the Council's Air Quality SPD, a total of four electric car charging points should be installed at the extended property, prior to occupation. A planning condition should be imposed to this effect.

#### **Flooding and drainage**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM39 (Managing Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage Systems)

- 4.33 The application site is not situated within Flood Risk Zone 2 or 3 and there is no water course on the site. Furthermore, there are no known surface or ground water issues in this locality.
- 4.34 As such, this proposal is not a risk from flooding and will not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

#### **Ecology**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development)

DSA: DM13 (Conservation and enhancement of sites, habitats and species of biodiversity and geodiversity importance), DM14 (Biodiversity in development)

- 4.35 Concern has been expressed by local residents that this proposal will have an adverse effect upon protected species such as birds, bats, hedgehogs, and other wildlife.
- 4.36 However, the application property is situated on a developed site within the urban area. As such, the likelihood of protected species being adversely affected is lessened and as a result a Preliminary Ecological Assessment has not been requested. However, in the event that development is undertaken at the property, the applicant and builder have a statutory obligation to ensure that no protected species is harmed as a result of development. In the event that species such as bats are found, any work must cease and a licence obtained from Natural England. The Applicant should be advised of the statutory obligations.
- 4.37 However, Policy DM34 of the Wycombe District Local Plan does require that all development provide a net gain in biodiversity. At present, no such information has been provided. Therefore a planning condition should be imposed on any subsequent planning condition to ensure that ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are undertaken.

#### **Building sustainability**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM41 (Optional Technical Standards for Building Regulations Approval)

- 4.38 It is considered necessary to condition water efficiency in accordance with Policy DM41.

### **5.0 Weighing and balancing of issues / Overall Assessment**

- 5.1 This section brings together the assessment that has so far been set out in order to weigh and balance relevant planning considerations in order to reach a conclusion on the application.
- 5.2 In determining the planning application, section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, Section 143 of the Localism Act amends Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act relating to the determination of planning applications and states that in dealing with planning applications, the authority shall have regard to:
- a. Provision of the development plan insofar as they are material,
  - b. Any local finance considerations, so far as they are material to the application (such as CIL if applicable), and,
  - c. Any other material considerations
- 5.3 As set out above it is considered that the proposed development would not accord with the development plan policies.
- 5.4 The Human Rights Act 1998 Article 1 the protection of property and the peaceful enjoyment of possessions and Article 8 the right to respect for private and family life, have been taken into account in considering any impact of the development on residential amenity and the measures to avoid and mitigate impacts. It is not considered that the development would infringe these rights.

## **6.0 Working with the applicant / agent**

- 6.1 In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (2019) the Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments.
- 6.2 The Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.
- 6.3 In this instance the applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit. The applicant was informed/ advised how the proposal did not accord with the development plan, that no material considerations are apparent to outweigh these matters and provided the opportunity to amend the application or provide further justification in support of it. The applicant/agent was given the opportunity to withdraw the application and seek further advice from the Council as to what may be achievable at the property. The applicant/agent declined this offer and requested that the application be determined.

## **7.0 Recommendation**

7.1 Refusal, for the following reason:

1. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, by virtue of its form, mass, siting and design, this proposal represents an overdevelopment of the application site which will detract from the character and appearance of the host property, and the character and visual amenity of the surrounding High Wycombe Town Centre Conservation Area. As such, this proposal is contrary to the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and Policies CP11 (Historic Environment), DM31 (Development Affecting the Historic Environment) and DM35 (Placemaking and Design) of the adopted Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019).

## **INFORMATIVE**

1. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF2 Buckinghamshire Council approach decision-taking in a positive and creative way taking a proactive approach to development proposals focused on solutions and work proactively with applicants to secure developments. Buckinghamshire Council work with the applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by offering a pre-application advice service, and as appropriate updating applications/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application. In this instance the applicant/agent was updated of any issues after the initial site visit. The applicant was informed/ advised how the proposal did not accord with the development plan, that no material considerations are apparent to outweigh these matters and provided the opportunity to amend the application or provide further justification in support of it. The applicant/agent was given the opportunity to withdraw the application and seek further advice from the Council as to what may be achievable at the property. The applicant/agent declined this offer and requested that the application be determined.



## **APPENDIX A: Consultation Responses and Representations**

### Councillor Comments

Cllr Knight: I am concerned that the proposed development will have a significant impact on this small street which has already seen another large development take place in recent years. The proposed development is within the conservation area and does not demonstrate any sensitivity to this and neighbouring listed building and it also seems that the plans around parking are inadequate and unrealistic. Along with my fellow councillors, Cllr Andrea Baughan and Cllr Nabeela Rana I would like to call this application into the Planning Committee for determination.

Cllr Baughan: Should Officers be minded to approve this Application, I would request it is heard by the Planning Committee. My reasons for objecting are as follows: Inadequate amount of parking spaces, not only for the proposed number of dwellings - the five residences proposed could lead to at least 8 additional cars belonging to residents on Stuart Road. We already have issues with displaced parking in Wycombe. This would lead to additional movement at this busy junction, delivery vehicles, refuse collections, visitors etc. The proposed extension, in terms of bulk and scale is unneighbourly - and in this Conservation area the mass will overwhelm the brick and flint building adjacent (No 25) as well as being overbearing and overlooking the private walled garden areas. Birds and bats have been sited in the eaves of Stuart Lodge. Moreover the adjacent Friends' Meeting House based at No 25 is a well-established Place of Worship also used as a community meeting space for Wycombe residents which has been able to have a co-operative relationship with the Women's Institute Members. In its current usage, Stuart Lodge's car park can allow for 10 cars parked off road.

Cllr Rana: I would like the application called into Committee as I am also concerned about the proposed Development.

As my colleagues Cllr Baughan & Cllr Knight have already stated The Building is in the conservation area and forms a group of Historic Houses which are linked to Furniture and Milling trade.

The proposal will spoil the conservation area and the no of Cars in a tiny road would cause overload to the neighbourhood and possibly causing safety issues for Pedestrians young and old alike.

Disruption to Highway feeding off the main road London Road would also cause delays exhaust the Travel system.

To expect Tenants /House holders to not have cars is a cause for concern.

No's 25 & 27 are Grade 2 Listed buildings as I'm sure you are aware

### Parish/Town Council Comments

#### **High Wycombe Town Unparished**

#### Consultation Responses:

##### Highway Authority:

No objection, subject to condition regarding closure of existing access.

Conservation Officer:

Objects to form, mass and design of proposal. Such proposals will detract from character and appearance of High Wycombe (Town) Conservation Area.

### Representations

#### **Amenity Societies/Residents Associations**

High Wycombe Society: Objects to this proposal on the following grounds:

- Loss of privacy and overlooking
- Lack of off street car parking
- Lack of private amenity space for new residents.

#### **Other Representations**

Objections have been received from adjacent residents. The grounds of objection include:

- Lack of off street car parking will exacerbate difficulties residents have in parking in this location
- Loss of highway safety
- Harm to character of area
- Harm to wildlife

# APPENDIX B: Site Location Plan

21/08599/FUL  
Scale 1/1250

