



## Report to West Area Planning Committee

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<b>Application Number:</b>	23/06146/R9FUL
<b>Proposal:</b>	Change of use of the first floor only from sui generis (social club and drinking establishment) to F1 (galleries, museums et al) in connection with the reuse of the first floor rooms in the ex-Liberal Club for the storage, display and maintenance of the chair and art collections owned by the local history museum
<b>Site Location:</b>	The Liberal Club Queen Victoria Road High Wycombe Buckinghamshire HP11 1BG
<b>Applicant:</b>	Buckinghamshire Council
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Victoria Burdett
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	Abbey
<b>Parish-Town Council:</b>	High Wycombe Town Unparished
<b>Date valid application received:</b>	2nd May 2023
<b>Statutory determination date:</b>	27th June 2023
<b>Recommendation</b>	Application Permitted

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

- 1.1 Planning permission is sought for change of use of the first floor only from sui generis (social club and drinking establishment) to F1 (galleries, museums et al) in connection with the reuse of the first floor rooms in the ex-Liberal Club for the storage, display and maintenance of the chair and art collections owned by the local history museum.
- 1.2 The application has been made on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council and is therefore due to be determined by the Planning Committee, in accordance with the Council's constitution.
- 1.3 The application site comprises a 1930s building located within the Wycombe Town Centre Conservation Area. The internal change of use of the first floor will not have a material impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area and is acceptable in heritage terms.
- 1.4 The proposed change of use would not adversely affect the amenities of any neighbouring properties or cause any harm to the local highway network.

- 1.5 The proposed development complies with the relevant Development Plan Policies and is therefore recommended for approval.

## **2.0 Description of Proposed Development**

- 2.1 The application relates to the ex-Liberal Club, now known as 'High Wycombe Social Club', located on Queen Victoria Road in High Wycombe; in between the Fire Station and Police Station. The host building has been in situ since the 1930's and lies within the Wycombe Town Centre Conservation Area. The building is not listed, or on the Council's local heritage list.
- 2.2 The application proposes a change of use of the first floor of the building from Use Class Sui Generis (social club and drinking establishments) to F1 (galleries, museums et al) in connection with the re-use of the first floor rooms for the storage, display and maintenance of the chair and art collections owned by the local history museum.
- 2.3 The first floor of the building is within a Sui Generis use, as it has previously been used as part of the social club. The first floor comprises of a dance floor and bar area, a 2-bedroom caretakers flat, female toilets and storage and ancillary rooms.
- 2.4 The use of the first floor dance floor has now been discontinued, and there is also no longer a need for a resident caretaker.
- 2.5 The proposal will self-contain the first floor from the ground floor to create separate space and use from the social club. No external changes are currently proposed as part of this application.
- 2.6 High Wycombe is a town with a long history of furniture making and is especially known for chair manufacture. The Wycombe Museum has a large and historically important collection of chairs, but due to existing space constraints, they are stored in unsatisfactory conditions and several locations locally, which are not easily available for display and there is a pressing need to release those alternative sites for other purposes.
- 2.7 It is noted that this application only concerns the first floor of the building, where the ground floor will be retained as the existing social club.
- 2.8 The application is accompanied by:
- a) Design, access and heritage statement
  - b) Plans

## **3.0 Relevant Planning History**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Development</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Decision Date</b>
03/05738/FUL	Conversion of roof space to relocate stewards flat with associated dormer windows & siting of tank room on roof	PER	19 May 2003
90/05100/FUL	TWO STOREY EXTENSION	REF	2 March 1990
91/06633/FUL	CONVERSION TO FORM ADDITIONAL	REF	19 December 1991

	ACCOMMODATION AND A SELF-CONTAINED STEWARDS FLAT		
92/05628/FUL	CONVERSION OF EXISTING ROOFSPACE TO FORM STEWARDS FLAT AND ADDITIONAL CLUB FACILITIES TO FIRST FLOOR LEVEL	PER	20 May 1992
94/06042/FUL	SITING OF TANK ROOM ON ROOF, SINGLE STOREY LOBBY EXTENSION & PROVISION OF DORMER WINDOWS	PER	26 August 1994
98/07545/FUL	Erection of replacement front boundary wall	PER	15 January 1999
98/07546/CAC	Demolition of existing front boundary wall and erection of replacement wall	PER	15 January 1999
06/06365/FUL	Conversion of roof space to relocate stewards flat with associated rooflights in front and side elevation	PER	26 July 2006
15/05546/OUT	Outline application (including details of access, appearance, layout and scale) for change of use existing liberal club with associated extensions and alterations to form 2 x 1 bed, 5 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed apartments	REF	18 May 2015
17/06953/ADV	Erection of 48-sheet internally-illuminated sequential advertising digital display board	REF	19 September 2017

#### 4.0 Policy Considerations and Evaluation

##### Principle and Location of Development

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

- 4.1 The application site is located within the built-up area of High Wycombe whereby a proposed change of use is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to complying with all relevant Development Plan Policies.

### **Employment issues**

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

4.2 The social club is still in operation, but the first-floor area is no longer needed. As such, the proposed change of use would not result in any loss of employment.

### **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)

4.3 The Highway Authority has been consulted on the application and has made the following comments:

4.4 “Thank you for your letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 with regard to the planning application at the above location, proposing the change of use of the first floor only from sui generis to F1 in connection with the reuse of the first-floor rooms in the ex-Liberal Club for the storage, display and maintenance of the chair and art collections owned by the local history museum.

4.5 Queen Victoria Road is classified as the A404, which is subject to a 30mph speed limit. This carriageway benefits from pedestrian walkways and street lighting. Parking and waiting restrictions are present along this street in the form of double-yellow lines in the vicinity of the application site.

4.6 In terms of trip generation, I anticipate that the vehicular trips following the implementation of the proposal would remain comparable to the existing situation.

4.7 Having assessed the proposal using the Buckinghamshire Countywide Parking Guidance 2015 (BCPG) policy document, the application site is located within Zone 1, which requires 1 space per 89sqm. I believe that 3 (no) parking bays would be required for optimum parking provision to serve the first floor. In accordance with the BCPG policy document, a parking space should measure 2.8m x 5.0m whereas the internal dimensions for a garage should be 3.0m x 6.0m.

4.8 The proposed increase of the gross floor area in question from 213m<sup>2</sup> to 273m<sup>2</sup> is effectively negligible. Whilst no details have been provided for the proposed parking arrangement to serve the application site, I believe the parking provision requirement would be unaffected as a result of the implementation of the proposals. I expect that the proposal would not result in adverse implications for the road safety of users and the convenience of the day-to-day operations of the highway network. Additionally, as the existing vehicular access would be retained, I am satisfied that acceptable visibility splays would continue for this access.

4.9 Mindful of the above, I offer no objection to the proposal and, in this instance, suggest no conditions for inclusion with any planning permission that you may choose to grant.

4.10 As such, the proposed development is not considered to have any detrimental highway or parking implications.

### **Raising the quality of place making and design**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): CP9 (Sense of place), DM34 (Delivering Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity in Development), DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)  
DSA: DM11 (Green networks and infrastructure)

- 4.11 The proposed development comprises of internal alterations only, whereby the external appearance of the building would remain unaltered.
- 4.12 The Conservation Officer has been consulted on the application and has confirmed that the internal change of use of the first floor will not have a material impact on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 4.13 Therefore, the proposed development would not cause any harm to the character and appearance of the existing building, or the wider locality.

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

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM35 (Placemaking and Design Quality)

- 4.14 The proposal is not considered to give rise to any negative impacts to adjoining occupiers.

#### **Environmental issues**

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

- 4.15 No objections have been received from the Council's Environmental Health Team.

#### **Flooding and drainage**

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

- 4.16 The application site is located within Flood Zone 1. Given the nature of the development, the proposed change of use and internal alterations would not pose any flood risk.

#### **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)

- 4.17 Policy DM34 requires all development to protect and enhance both biodiversity and green infrastructure features and networks both on and off site for the lifetime of the development.
- 4.18 No assessment has been provided with this proposal. In this instance, given the nature of the proposal there would be no impact on site biodiversity, whilst enhancement is not considered proportionate.

#### **Community facilities**

Wycombe District Local Plan (August 2019): DM29 (Community Facilities)

- 4.19 The proposed change of use would not result in the loss of a community facility, as the existing social club is proposed to be retained, but at ground floor level only.

### **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 accord with the relevant Development Plan Policies.
- 5.4 Local Planning Authorities, when making decisions of a strategic nature, must have due regard, through the Equalities Act, to reducing the inequalities which may result from socio-economic disadvantage. In this instance, it is not considered that this proposal would disadvantage any sector of society to a harmful extent.
- 5.5 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty the LPA must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity, as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In making this recommendation, regard has been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the relevant protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation). The application provides for the change of use of the existing first floor. It is not considered that discrimination or inequality would arise from the proposal.
- 5.6 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 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 applicant/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application.
- 6.3 In this instance:
  - the application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.
  - The application was considered by the Planning Committee where the applicant/agent had the opportunity to speak to the committee and promote the application.

## **7.0 Recommendation**

- 7.1 Application Permitted

Subject to the following conditions and reasons:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be built in accordance with the details contained in the planning application hereby approved and plan numbers BC1, 7395/20/02 and E0123-F unless the Local Planning Authority otherwise first agrees in writing.

Reason: In the interest of proper planning and to ensure a satisfactory development of the site.

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

### Councillor Comments

None received.

### Parish/Town Council Comments

High Wycombe Town Unparished

### Consultation Responses

Conservation Officer – No objection

Environmental Health – No objection

Highways – No objection

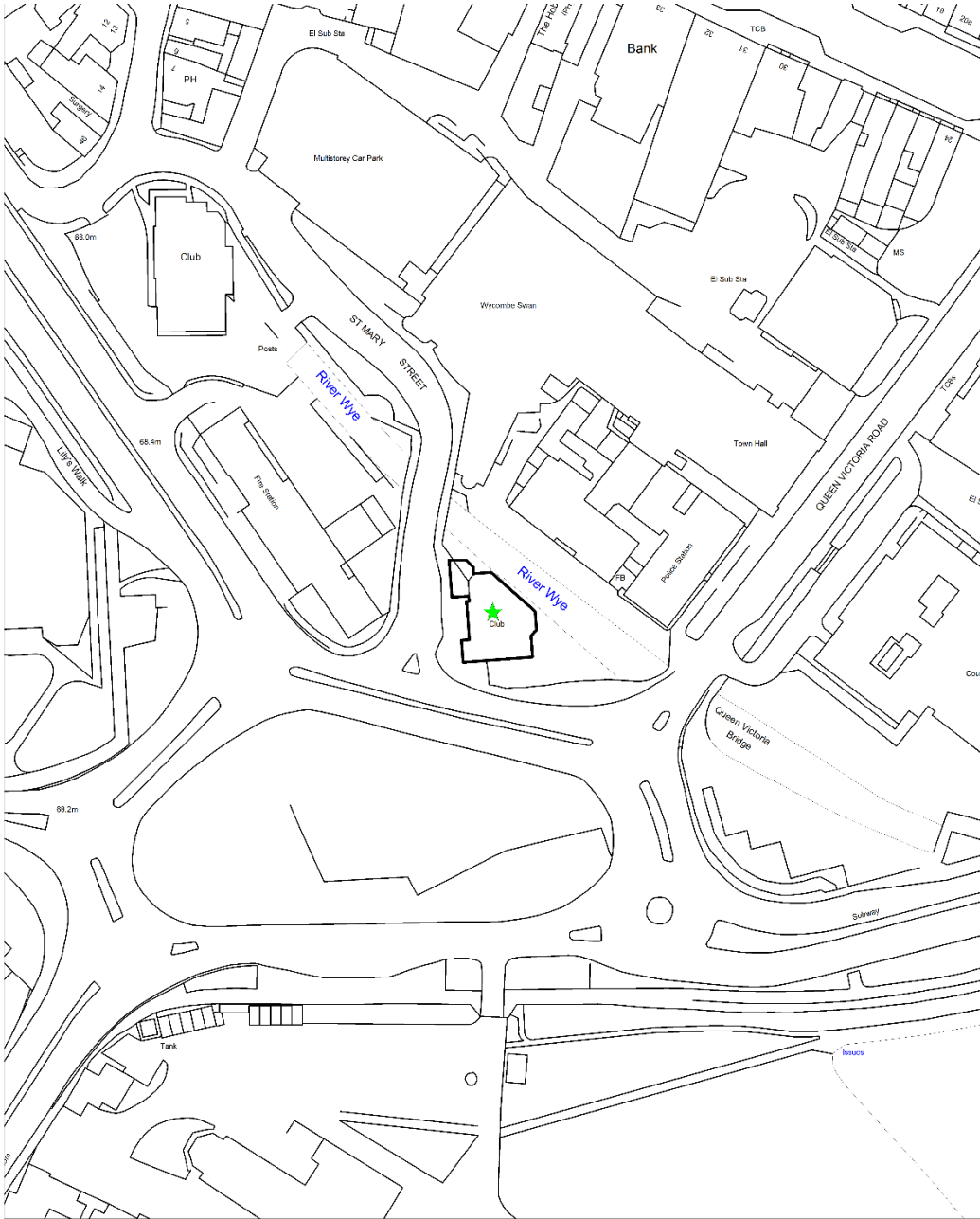
### Representations

None received.



# APPENDIX B: Site Location Plan

23/06146/R9FUL  
Scale 1/1250



Planning Committee  
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