

PLANNING STATEMENT

IN SUPPORT OF FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF A 7-BED DWELLING HOUSE (USE CLASS 'C3') TO A 9-BED HOUSE OF MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (USE CLASS 'SUI GENERIS').

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3-Storey Semi-Detached Residential Property.
- Property has been empty and uninhabited for 2 years.
- 3 off-road car parking spaces provided on driveway.
- Patio area with tables & chairs at rear of property.
- Residential street with neighbouring mixed commercial & retail areas.
- Numerous local amenities, shops, services and community facilities all within a short walking distance.
- Less than 100 metres to Orrell Park train station and major arterial route bus stops located directly outside the property.

PROPOSAL

The proposal seeks planning permission for the change of use of this Dwelling House (Use Class 'C3') to a 9-bed House of Multiple Occupancy (Use Class 'Sui Generis') for working professionals.

The purpose is to offer high quality, affordable shared accommodation to working professional people such as key workers, graduates, local workers and those on secondment with their employment (NB – Not students).

The building will be refurbished to a very high standard by a reputable building firm.

- A dormer window on the 2nd floor rear elevation, which will be sympathetic in design and use matching materials to the original construction, is the only structural alteration to the property.
- A conservatory structure in the rear garden, which will be sympathetic in design and use matching materials to the original construction, and the erection of solar panels on the rear elevation of the roof, are the only external alterations to the property.

- Provide 7 en-suite bedrooms and 2 double bedrooms, which will share 1 x communal Shower & WC room.
 - Provide communal Kitchen / Dining area and a separate communal Living room.
- > The alterations can clearly be seen on the submitted floor plans.

USE CLASS CHANGE FROM C3

Whether by definition of being a 9-bed HMO, this application falls into the 'sui generis' use class as opposed to the new C4 use class, is dependent on whether it is considered that the land use has been 'materially altered' as a result of the increase above 6 beds. Some Appeals considered at other councils have taken the view that it does not, but each case of course has to be judged on its own merits, as a matter of fact & degree. (Ref: APP/D1780/C/04/1162748 & APP/Y0435/A/07/20550499).

RELEVANT HISTORY AND CONSULTATION

A previous application, 15F/1222, was submitted to Liverpool City Council for the use of the property as a 9 bedroom house in multiple occupation and a dormer to rear elevation. The Head of Planning believed that the proposal should be granted, however it was decided that the proposal should be refused. The grounds of refusal were due to the believed intensive use of the premises and the subsequent detrimental impact the use would have on the surrounding residential amenity and character of the area. The applicant believes that they have addressed these issues within their application, in line with the Council's policies and standards. This is an application for a different type of HMO, although there will be the same number of occupiers. PPP and the landlord only accept tenants who are professionals and who will respect their environment and neighbours. The high level of refurbishment and finish this property will undergo reflects the types of tenants that will be living there.

In addition, there was a historical planning application (not made by the applicant) on the property for the conversion from a dwelling house into one x self-contained flat and 6 x bed sit rooms (Planning Application A23499). The decision of this is uncertain; however the use may have been carried out - perhaps unlawfully, as the property has clearly been previously arranged for this purpose at one time. This indicated that the property may have previously been used to a similar intensity, with no complaints.

The applicant has met and exceeded the required standards for properties of this kind.

The applicant has also notified neighbours in early October of the proposed changes to the property and to date the applicant has not received any objections from neighbours.

THE APPLICANT

The applicant is a member of the National Landlord's Association and is an Accredited Cheshire Landlord and successfully operates Council licensed HMO's in Warrington, and would become an Accredited Liverpool Landlord upon approval of his application. The applicant directly manages their own properties, as well as already managing two HMO's for working professional in neighbouring Sefton. The applicant actively manages this portfolio of HMOs in a professional manner themselves, i.e. no agents are involved, and will continue to do so with the addition of this HMO.

The applicant is a Franchise Member of a large national organisation Platinum Property Partners (PPP), which is committed to meeting local housing need by providing high quality shared accommodation for local professionals and key workers. Further information about PPP can be found in the submitted supporting documents.

QUALITY OF ACCOMMODATION

The property, which has been empty and uninhabited for the last 2 years, requires both structural repairs and an extensive refurbishment program to bring the property back into use. This completed renovation will be to an extremely high standard maintaining the national profile of PPP, as well as provide the quality of accommodation that our typical tenants are looking for. Examples of PPP accommodation, as well examples of the applicant's other properties, are provided in the submitted supporting documents.

The 25m² Kitchen / Dining room is more than double the size of the Liverpool City Council HMO amenity standards of 11m², which is the requirement of 1 Kitchen providing for 9 persons - i.e. 7m² = 5 persons + 1m² x 4 persons = 11m².

A further 20m² of communal space will be provided in the adjoining Living room (i.e. Conservatory), which will be fully furnished with Settees, Coffee Table, Set of Dining Table & Chairs as well as Freeview TV & DVD / Blu-ray Player.

Sustainability is important to the applicant and this is reflected by the installation of solar power panel system on the rear elevation of the roof. All windows will be replaced with new uPVC double glazed units and a full new central heating system & boiler will be installed. Energy efficient appliances, including 2 x washing machines, tumble driers, microwaves and fridge / freezers are to be provided.

High speed fibre optic broadband, wi-fi & ethernet, will be provided throughout and each bedroom will also have a TV aerial socket in addition to the ethernet point.

The applicant will employ professional cleaners to maintain the property on a weekly basis and use the services of a gardener for external upkeep.

TENANTS

The applicant is committed to ensuring that the new use of the property does not have an adverse impact upon the amenity of the surrounding neighbours. The applicant solely manages their own properties with no agents involved. Therefore, tenants, neighbours and Liverpool City Council alike will only ever deal directly with the landlord (i.e the applicant).

Tenants are carefully screened using background, employment and credit references. If an applicant is from outside the country, an identity check will also be included to validate their legal status in the country.

In many areas there is great concern about the effect HMO's have on the local community, this can be caused by density of that type of housing, noise and anti-social behaviour from tenants. The applicant believes that this is caused by the choice and standard of property. By providing a high quality residence aimed at working professionals this problem would not exist.

Additionally, the applicant would manage the property in the following ways to ensure that any issues affecting the other tenants, neighbours or the larger community will be dealt with immediately:

- each tenant will be vetted
- the applicant will liaise with neighbours who will be given contact telephone numbers of the applicant. The applicant will visit the property once a week to check on communal areas
- quarterly inspections of all bedrooms will take place to ensure the highest standards are maintained
- both the weekly cleaner and gardener will also monitor and report any concerns to the applicant.

Whilst it is not applicable to this type of property, the applicant endorses the Government's 'Respect Standard for Housing Management'.

PLANNING POLICY AND MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The proposal fully complies with the policies contained in the Liverpool City Council Local Plan Core Strategy 2014. In order to support this proposal the applicant has drawn on a wide range of other reference material:

- Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2002
- Draft Core Strategy/Emerging Local Plan
- Liverpool Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2011
- Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)
- National Planning Policy Framework
- Housing Needs Assessment
- DCLG 'Residential Car Parking Research'
- Kate Barker's Review of Housing Supply
- DCLG 'Delivering Affordable Housing' 2006
- Green Paper 'Homes for the Future – More Affordable, More Sustainable' 2007
- Secure By Design Principles 2004.

HOUSING

✓ Unitary Development Plan 2002

Policy H3 – City Centre Living supports proposals that improve the City Centre Housing Stock while not prejudicing or harming the character, viability or functioning of the area's predominant land use in terms of scale, density and design. This proposal will provide adequate amenity space for future residents and will be providing a high standard of accommodation to meet the market need for this type of accommodation in the City of Liverpool. The amenity and character of the area will not be harmed. No students will be occupying this property and all tenants will be employed and working between 8-12 hours per day.

Policy H4 requires that any new development for the change of use will have no adverse impact on residential amenity of the character of the area, subject to other policies of the Plan. This proposed change of use to a 9-bed HMO will provide a high quality form of accommodation for young professionals and key workers. Three off-street parking spaces are provided which will be sufficient for the number of tenants and their level of private car usage. Spacious and well-designed amenity space will be provided internally, which will exceed the minimum standards outlined by Liverpool City Council for this type of property. Due to market demand, it is felt that the re-use of this building for an HMO would be sustainable and contributes towards a mix of housing type and tenure in the local area. Therefore, this proposal will help to meet local housing needs. The conversion will offer an affordable housing option for those currently unable to buy their own home.

Policy H5 – New Residential Development requires that the density, design and layout of the development respects the character of the surrounding area and maintains the levels of privacy and amenity for existing and future residents. Although this is not a new development, this proposed change of use will provide a high quality HMO which is affordable and of high internal design. The external appearance of the property will not be altered by the change of use and the properties use as an HMO will not prevent it from being converted back into a family dwelling in the future, if market demand requires. In addition, the proposal will provide adequate parking for this type of development and for the needs of its proposed tenants. The Head of Planning noted in the previous Application that the

proposed development would not result in an adverse impact on residential amenity and that its use would not significantly alter the balance of the community.

Policy H7 – Conversion of Buildings for Multiple Occupation requires that the HMO be designed to a high standard, both internally and externally, and is of a suitable size and location for conversion. This proposal complies with the advice contained in the City Council's 'Code of Practice for Houses in Multiple Occupation' regarding minimum sizes, acoustic insulation, light and ventilation. The property is located in a sustainable location, close to local shops, facilities, public transportation and cycle routes. The property will remain in character with the local distinctiveness of the area and will not reduce the light or privacy of neighbouring properties. This proposal therefore complies also to policy HD18 – General Design Requirements. In addition, it was noted in the previous Application that the Head of Planning considered this change of use to be acceptable in principle and that the premises would remain in residential use.

HD20 – Crime Prevention encourages the design and layout of developments to incorporate measures that reflect the need to make proper provision for personal safety and crime prevention. The proposed conversion contributes to a mix of housing type and tenure whilst safeguarding the residential nature of the local area. The property will be well maintained and will result in no adverse impact on neighbours or the neighbourhood. Furthermore, the increase in number of occupants increases natural surveillance along the street and therefore contributes towards crime prevention.

The proposal specifically meets the requirements of Policies H4 and H7. These two policies were mentioned in the decision notice for application 15F/1222 as one of the main reasons for refusal due to non-compliance. This proposal will increase the number of tenants and subsequently result in an increase in the natural surveillance of the area, helping towards crime prevention. In addition, the conversion will further protect neighbour amenity in terms of daylight and natural sunlight by ensuring that there will be no overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties. The property will provide 3 off-street car parking spaces to the rear of the property, which is in line with the Council's parking standards. The property is located in an easily accessible location, close to local shops, services and employment centres and public transport connections are all very nearby.

✓ Draft Core Strategy/Emerging Local Plan

Strategic Policy 1 – Sustainable Development Principles requires that development be located and designed so that resources are used prudently and the wider environment is protected, while the needs of the whole community are taken into account. This proposal will be bringing a vacant 7-bed family dwelling (C3) into the use of a 9-bed HMO (Sui Generis). The development will provide for young professionals who are unable to afford their own property. The HMO will ensure that Liverpool offers a range of housing tenures and will promote the idea of a sustainable and mixed community, resulting in the re-use of an existing vacant property. All internal and external alterations will be of good design and quality. Energy efficient appliances will be used wherever possible, and the solar power panels installation will ensure the long term sustainability of the property.

Strategic Policy 13 – Housing Mix – Citywide Principles and Affordable Housing states that the Council prioritises the delivery of development, which will broaden the City's housing types and affordability. This proposal will be affordable and offer all inclusive room rents. The applicant also believes that by offering this type of accommodation they enhance the choice for local tenants and assist with achieving balanced communities and supporting the local economy.

✓ Liverpool Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2011

This SHMA acknowledges the difficulty first time buyers face with regards to being offered mortgages and therefore the ability to purchase a home. Long waiting lists for social rented properties have forced young emerging households into the private rented sector. There is grave concern about the quality of stock in this tenure. In addition, the SHMA outlines a significant growth in the number of single person households. This will inevitably increase the number of would-be first-time buyers looking for good quality rented accommodation. The SHMA also found a shortfall of affordable housing in the City. This proposal will provide high quality accommodation with all inclusive, affordable rents for young-professionals and key workers. The provision of this type of accommodation will increase the opportunities for this sector of the population in finding appropriate housing solutions, and will enable them to remain in the City for employment. The proposed conversion helps address current housing issues facing Liverpool, particularly for young people, by providing an affordable accommodation option, at a high standard and in a sustainable location.

✓ Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Liverpool City Council does not have a specific SPD for HMOs; however, SPG 7 – Conversion of Building into Flats and Bedsits outlines the importance of encouraging more housing provision in the City and promoting the re-use of vacant and under used buildings. The Council states that they expect all development to comply with the Council's standards, particularly with regard to internal space. According to this document the requirements for amenity space, car parking and aspect will be applied flexibly. Therefore, whilst this HMO is not a bedsit, this proposal will endeavour to meet all the Council's requirements. In addition, this HMO will meet the requirements outlined in the Guidance on Standards and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation produced by the licensing team and will provide sufficient parking for the activity of its occupants.

The applicant is confident that the change of use will not have a negative impact on neighbourhood amenity. Given the large size of the property, the house will contain no more occupants than were it in C3 use. All tenants will be vetted prior to their tenancy beginning and the Tenancy Agreement will also have stipulations in relation to respect for neighbours with particular regard for parking and noise. There will be regular inspections to ensure the property is maintained to the highest standards and will be cleaned weekly.

✓ National Planning Policy Framework

The proposal fully accords with the objectives of the recently adopted National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This states that local authorities need to deliver 'a wide choice of high quality homes' and 'create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.' This application will improve the mix of community in this family area ensuring a more sustainable and balanced community.

The proposal can also be seen to comply with another key policy set out in the NPPF – the need to encourage effective use of land by reusing land that has previously been developed. By converting a large existing vacant house, much needed accommodation has been provided without new development in an affordable manner.

✓ Delivering Affordable Housing

This report states that ‘the Government believes everyone should have the opportunity of a decent home, which they can afford, within a sustainable mixed community. This means providing a wide choice of housing to meet the needs of the whole community in terms of tenures and price ranges. This should include affordable housing, both social rented and intermediate.’

This report also acknowledges in paragraph 6 that ‘the increase in house prices relative to incomes in recent years has been marked. As a consequence first time buyers are finding it very difficult to buy a home in the market.’ This statement was made prior to the credit crisis, and heightened restrictions in lending have only exacerbated the situation for young first time buyers. It goes on to cite as a consequence of this, that ‘there are now far more areas where local authorities need, through the planning system, to be thinking about provision of intermediate market housing.’

Low cost market housing is no longer a part of the government’s definition of affordable housing since the change in affordable housing definitions. Paragraph 41 of ‘Delivering Affordable Housing’ states however that it ‘can play an important role in meeting housing demand’.

✓ Key workers

This HMO will also help address the need for key worker accommodation. There is an identified need nationally for housing for key workers to enable our core facilities to operate properly. An HMO for young professionals such as this provides an affordable option for key workers to live near their place of work in high quality accommodation. Across the 159 franchise partners, 26.6% of tenants are key workers as defined on the Direct.gov.uk website, showing that this type of accommodation is proven to meet this need.

✓ Kate Barker’s Review of Housing Supply

This report analysed the problems of the housing supply in England. ‘In many parts of the country, house prices have increased rapidly because the supply of housing has not kept up with demand. This is mainly due to increased numbers of households, caused by growth in

the population and particularly the number of one person households'. This HMO can be seen to address both the problems of demand for single person dwellings and affordability.

✓ Change to Local Housing Allowance

From January 2012 the way LHA is allocated changed and single people under 35 are required to stay in shared accommodation. This will in the future have an impact on what type of private rented accommodation is required. This will mean that there will be an increased need for houses in multiple occupation and although this HMO will not house recipients of LHA it will push tenants looking for this type of accommodation up the ladder and more HMOs of all quality levels, including this at the very highest, will be required.

✓ Local Government Association Campaign – Housing The Nation

This campaign aims to achieve national reform to encourage the provision of more high quality accommodation. This states that 'putting existing homes to good use...can address the housing shortage quicker than building new properties.' This application aims to make efficient use of a large house to provide affordable, high quality accommodation.

TRANSPORT AND PARKING

✓ Unitary Development Plan 2002

T12 Car Parking Provision for New Developments states that the parking requirements will be determined by its location and the nature and type of use of the development. This proposal will provide 3 off-street parking spaces to the rear of the property, which is in line with the Council's parking standards outlined in SPG8. This is believed to be suitable due to the sustainable location of the property within Liverpool City. The property is less than a minute walk from Orrell Park train station and there are numerous bus stops and services running along Moss Lane (A566). The property is located close to local shops, services and community facilities. In addition to 3 parking spaces, the applicant will also be providing secure cycle storage at the rear of the property for the use of all 9 tenants.

The property is sustainably located and is within convenient access of green modes of transport that provide linkages with the City Centre and other places of interest. In

recognition of this within the property maps are displayed on the house notice board to inform tenants of the location of cycle, pedestrian and public transport facilities, together with local bus and rail timetables. The applicant draws this information to the attention of new tenants to promote the use of green modes of transport.

In addition, the Highways Manager who commented on the previous Application offered no objection to an application for 9 rooms with 3 parking spaces. The Highways Manager noted that the single dwelling could be used lawfully as a 6-bed HMO without the need for planning permission and considered that the addition of three bedrooms would have a minimal impact in terms of generating additional traffic on the network. The Highways Manager also considered that development of this type generally provides housing for residents who rely more heavily on public transport, walking and cycling, as modes of travel, rather than attracting those who require dedicated parking.

A recent appeal, APP/E3525/W/15/3005163, which granted permission for a 7-bed HMO for Platinum Property Partners supports this argument. The Inspector found that potential occupiers would know the amount of parking available either on site or within the area, and if for the prospective tenant parking provision was an important consideration this would impact upon the attractiveness of that property as a home.

✓ Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

SPG 8 – Car and Cycle Parking Standards does not have specific guidance for HMOs in terms of car and cycle parking requirements. For a detached or semi-detached dwelling house the minimum parking standard requirement is 2 spaces per dwelling. This proposal provides 3 off-street parking spaces with additional cycle storage with space for 9 cycles.

✓ National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF states that transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and developments should be designed so journey times are minimised.

This property is situated in a very sustainable location with numerous local amenities, shops, services and community facilities all within a short walking distance. In addition, the property is less than 100 metres from both Orrell Park Railway Station and bus stops on major arterial routes are located directly outside the property.

✓ DCLG Residential Car Parking Research

Platinum Property Partners has undertaken a survey of the car ownership of all tenants across the group's property portfolio members in the UK. This has established that only 58.18% of all the tenants use cars, even though 100% are in employment and 83.12% work within 5 miles of the properties they rent. This is largely due to the sustainable locations that are chosen for the PPP properties, in addition to the personal circumstances of the tenants. This supports research by the government. The report entitled "Residential Car Parking Research" published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (May 2007) states that "Tenure is another influence on household car ownership. In particular households occupying rented accommodation can have up to 0.5 fewer cars than owner occupied households in dwellings of similar size and type.

SUSTAINABILITY

✓ National Planning Policy Framework

The applicant supports the Government's drive for sustainable development and this change of use will improve the sustainability of the wider community and of the property itself through the use of energy efficient appliances.

✓ Green Paper: Homes for the Future

This states 'we need more sustainable homes as well as more affordable homes'.

Although HMOs are exempt from the government's EPC initiative, the applicant will be taking the following energy generation and conservation measures:

- Install solar power generation to ensure long term sustainability of property
- Install new uPVC double glazed windows throughout
- Fit thermostatic radiator valves throughout
- Fit low energy light bulbs as standard
- Install motion sensor lights in the hallways, stairs and landings

- Use multiple period digital central heating controls to ensure both tenant comfort and reduce environmental impact
- Operate laundry facilities on coin operated machines to limit excessive and needless use.

SECURITY

✓ Secure by Design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

The official UK Police initiative states that ‘maintenance standards send powerful signals that undoubtedly influence people’s behaviour. Sufficient resources must be made available to adequately maintain buildings and communal spaces’. The applicant employs a regular cleaner, gardener and window cleaner, monitors waste disposal and is committed to external maintenance to contribute to the street scene.

The layout of the property and number of tenants will also increase natural surveillance in the area as described in Crime Prevention Through Environment Design.

REFUSE MANAGEMENT

The applicants plan to provide a storage area to the side of the property to accommodate bins for the recycling waste and general waste, as indicated on plans.

PLANNING LEGISLATION

Since 1st October 2010 “any change of use between C3 dwelling houses and C4 HMOs will be able to happen without planning permission unless the local council believes there is a problem with such development in a particular area”. While this application is concerned with the conversion of a C3 to Sui Generis HMO, the move by the government shows recognition of the important accommodation gap that HMOs fill whatever their size.

The applicants support the intention to ensure high standards of amenity for the shared housing sector and to ensure respect for the neighbourhood.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

When announcing the changes to HMO planning legislation in June 2010, Housing Minister Grant Shapps stated "Shared homes ensure people who want to live and work in towns and cities can do so, and are vital to the economy." The applicant and PPP are committed to providing high quality shared accommodation for professionals, enabling them to live and work in towns of their choice. He also stated "These changes will safeguard the supply of shared housing where it is needed without burdening landlords with cumbersome red tape - but will also hand councils the flexibility they need to tackle problems where they occur." The applicants and PPP applaud raising the standards of the private rented sector and are committed to contributing to sustainable development and meeting a growing housing need.

It has been demonstrated that this conversion to a 9-bed HMO will fully comply with policies within the Local Plan and the applicant believes that the use of this dwelling as an HMO would be a very appropriate use for the property. The applicant is both committed and proven in providing a well-run, well-maintained HMO and makes the following points:

- the proposed change of use would provide much needed safe, high quality accommodation for working professionals
- it would meet a recognised housing need in a sustainable location
- the proposed use would be in keeping with the residential character of the surrounding area
- it would assist in creating a suitable housing mix (in accordance with the aims of national planning guidance).

The applicant believes that by providing an HMO of this high standard they are both complying with the aims of the legislation introduced in April , as well as setting a standard which will reflect present and future local policies.

Notwithstanding the information above and in the rest of this application, the applicants would welcome any advice the Planning Department can give and will endeavour to satisfy any other planning criteria for change of use approval.