

Report for Resolution

Report to Planning Applications Committee
Date 18 October 2012
Report of Head of Planning Services
Subject 11/02115/F 122 Unthank Road Norwich NR2 2RS

Item
5(1)

SUMMARY

Description:	Extension and subdivision of existing building to provide 5 No. one bedroom flats.	
Reason for consideration at Committee:	Objection	
Recommendation:	Approved	
Ward:	Town Close	
Contact Officer:	Miss Sarah Platt	Planning Officer - Development Management 01603 212500
Date of receipt:	30th November 2011	
Applicant:	Mr Martin Hendrie	
Agent:	Mr John Norfolk	

INTRODUCTION

The Site

Location and Context

1. The application site can be found on the south side of Unthank Road on the corner with York Street. The building is a three storey plus basement end terrace property, typical of its period. The building is red brick with a red pantile roof. Modifications have been made to the internal structure in previous years so no internal original features remain. To the rear of the site is a garden area, currently overgrown and untidy.
2. The application site fronts the Unthank Road local centre so is in close proximity to local services. The surrounding areas are residential in character with terraced Victorian properties of 2 and 3 storeys. The building is not within a Conservation Area.

Topography

3. The land slopes down from the back to the front of the site towards Unthank Road by approximately 1.5m.

Planning History

4. The property has been in use as 10no. on person bedsits until it was closed by a Prohibition Order under the Housing Act 2004 on 11th August 2011.

Equality and Diversity Issues

There are no significant equality or diversity issues.

The Proposal

5. The application seeks the redevelopment and conversion of the property to form 3 no 1 bed flats and 2 no 1 bed flats over the four floors with associated cycle parking and amenity areas.

Representations Received

6. Advertised on site and in the press. Adjacent and neighbouring properties have been notified in writing. 7 letters of representation have been received from 4 different objectors citing the issues as summarised in the table below.

7.

Issues Raised	Response
Each flat should have a corresponding parking space allocated on site. Residents must not be able to park in adjoining roads.	Paragraph 24-26
5 new cars in this permit parking area will result in over congestion of parking spaces. The proposed garden area should therefore be given over for parking provision. Refuse collection needs careful consideration – obstructions to the pavements are often caused by wheelie bins being left out.	Paragraph 24-26 Paragraph 23
Health and safety issues as a result of construction works affecting nearby businesses, particularly airborne dust etc.	Paragraph 14-15
The principle of conversion is supported but another multiple occupancy building is not appropriate. The outside space provision is insufficient. Parking is already oversubscribed in this area and the addition of more cars will add to this problem. Bins should be collected from the rear service access – most bins are left out on the pavements causing obstructions for residents and pedestrians.	Paragraph 10-13 Paragraph 18-20 Paragraph 24-26 Paragraph 23

Consultation Responses

8. Local Highway Authority: No objections in principle. Policy dictates that no new parking permits will be issued for this property. The property is well located for public transport connections and is in a suitable location for cycling and walking journeys. The communal bin store needs to accommodate 1 x 1100 waste bins and 3 x 360 recycling bins, it should be on a level with the pavement and accessible

within 5m of the highway for collection purposes. The cycle store must accommodate 5 no cycles. A purpose built secure storage should be provided so as to avoid theft.

9. Private Sector Housing: The building as a whole has been issued with an Emergency Prohibition Order under Section 43 of the Housing Act 2004. The order was placed on the property due to fire safety, excess cold and entry by intruder hazards. The building cannot be used for living and/or sleeping until the Order is revoked. This Order will only be revoked after an inspection has revealed that there are no longer any category 1 hazards. **(NB Committee members should be aware that it is this order which has provoked the works being applied for here).**

ASSESSMENT OF PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant Planning Policies

National Planning Policy Framework:

Statement 4 – Promoting sustainable transport
Statement 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
Statement 7 – Requiring good design

Relevant policies of the adopted East of England Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2008

T14 - Parking
ENV7 - Quality in the Built Environment

Relevant policies of the adopted Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2011

Policy 2 – Promoting good design
Policy 3 – Energy and water
Policy 4 – Housing delivery
Policy 6 – Access and transportation
Policy 20 - Implementation

Relevant saved policies of the adopted City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan 2004

NE9 - Comprehensive landscaping scheme and tree planting
HBE12 - High quality of design in new developments
EP20 - Sustainable use of materials
EP22 - High standard of amenity for residential occupiers
HOU18 – Conversion of properties to houses of multiple occupation and building flats
TRA7 - Cycle parking standards
TRA9 – Car free housing - criteria
TRA8 - Servicing provision

Other Material Considerations

Local Financial Considerations
Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth March 2011

Principle of Development

Policy Considerations

10. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local authorities should promote the bringing back into use of empty houses (paragraph 51) and saved

policy HOU18 of the Local Plan continues this approach stating the criteria against which conversions of larger houses will be considered against;

- Their impact on the character of the surrounding area;
 - The suitability of the site for such housing provision;
 - The satisfactory provision of defensible amenity space, and;
 - The density of the bed spaces created.
11. 122 Unthank Road was previously a large house of multiple occupation with 10no 1 bed bedsits. As stated above in 'Consultation responses' a prohibition Order was placed on the property due to poor standards of accommodation. The current application sees the property converted into 5 self-contained flats. Whilst this results in a net decrease in the number of dwellings, the density is still considered acceptable and the knock-on impacts of the net reduction will have other positive benefits.
12. The surrounding area is residential in character and the use of this property for residential purposes is considered to be complementary. Amenity provision will be discussed in detail under the appropriate heading below but adequate provision is considered to be made on site. The highly sustainable location of the property, directly opposite the Unthank Road local centre, means that this is a highly appropriate location for residential conversion.
13. Therefore the proposals are considered acceptable in principle and meet the objectives of the NPPF and the policy criteria as outlined in saved local plan policy HOU18.

Other Material Considerations

14. Concerns have been raised by a local business owner with regards to the impacts of the building works. It is standard practice for an informative note advising developers of the Considerate Constructors Scheme (see attached extract) to be attached to any permission and this would be the case in this instance.
15. There is not considered to be any significant works that would result in businesses on Unthank Road, on the opposite side of the road, being forced to close during building operations. Further, the works proposed are either to the rear of the dwelling or internal, save for new boundary treatments and landscaping works.

Housing Proposals

Affordable Housing

16. Joint Core Strategy policy 4 normally requires affordable housing to be provided on development schemes of 5 or more dwellings. However, the net increase in the number of dwellings to be provided here would only amount to 4 (given the existing 1no original dwelling house). Therefore the requirement for affordable housing is not triggered.

Housing Numbers and Density

17. Concerns have been raised by local residents that the proposals for conversion of the dwelling to 5no flats is not appropriate in this area. Whilst there is a plethora of multiple occupation terraced houses in this area, this proposal represents a net reduction in the numbers of bed spaces and therefore reduced numbers for occupation on that previously whilst increasing the quality of accommodation. In addition, the NPPF states that local authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends of the community. This is an area where there is a prevalent student demographic and hence a high demand for student accommodation for 1 and 2 bed properties on public transport routes to the University. This is a highly sustainable location both in terms of access to the university and other services in the immediate locality and as such is therefore considered to be a suitable and appropriate site for accommodation of this nature.

Design

Layout and Amenity provision

18. The site layout has been carefully considered and whilst the proposed new extension to the rear of the property will result in the loss of some of the rear amenity space, the remaining areas are still considered acceptable for this purpose. Refuse and cycle storage is provided and this will be discussed in more detail under the appropriate heading below.
19. Flat 2 benefits from a private amenity area accessed from the living room. The remaining 4 flats share the communal garden to the rear (102sqm in total, equating to 25.5sqm per flat – not including the area along the east boundary of the site. A condition requiring details of landscaping, both hard and soft, will be applied to any approval granted in order to ensure that this is of a high quality.

Scale

20. The application sees the demolition of an existing lean-to structure to the rear of the property. This structure is dilapidated and in need of substantial repair. As such its loss is considered acceptable. The new extension proposed to replace this lean-to is considered acceptable in terms of its scale and design. It remains subservient in scale and form to the main dwelling, despite the significant increase in size. The materials proposed will match that of the existing property which is considered acceptable.

Detailing

21. An enforcement case is currently under investigation with regards to the windows in this property. The original application saw timber windows proposed however, the applicant now proposes upvc windows.
22. The use of upvc is not normally accepted in Conservation areas or in close proximity to Listed Buildings. However, none of these special circumstances apply in this case. Whilst the building is prominent within the street scene there are a range of window materials and designs in the area and as such, the use of upvc is considered acceptable in principle. The applicant has submitted examples of other conversions carried out by his company to show the standard achieved in terms of detailing of the windows and the finish of the properties. Whilst this is reassuring, it is still felt prudent to impose a condition on any approval granted to ensure that the design and detailing of the new windows will be acceptable.

Transport and Access

Servicing

23. A secure and purpose built refuse and recycling storage area is proposed with direct access to the highway, accessed from York Street. Communal bin stores are usually serviced by refuse operatives and collected from the communal store and replaced therein. As such, the residents concerns with regards to bins being stored on the pavement should not be an issue. However, the management of the service areas and the collection and returning of refuse bins is a private matter for the residents and landlord of the property or the refuse collection authority and not a matter for planning. Sufficient provision has been made to an acceptable standard to satisfy the planning policy criteria.

Car Parking

24. Concerns have been raised by local residents with regard to parking issues that currently exist on York Street and in the surrounding area. The property was formerly 10 no 1 bed bedsits. The proposals for 5 no flats therefore represent a reduction on former levels of bed spaces and expected car parking levels respectively. York Street has parking restrictions (i.e. a parking permit is required)

24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The local highway authority has advised that no new parking permits will be issued for the residents of this conversion.

25. In addition, the flats are proposed as car free and therefore it is not expected that any future occupiers would have a car. To support this there are a number city car club cars within a 10 minute walk and the site is located on the routes of several frequent bus routes both to and from the city and to the wider area.

26. As such, the proposals are considered to meet the criteria of saved policy TRA9 of the local plan which promotes car free housing.

Cycling Parking

27. Sufficient provision is shown to be provided for 5no cycles equating to 1 cycle space per dwelling. This is considered acceptable and to be in accordance with the policy requirements. The applicant has intimated that depending on the type of storage used, provision for up to 8no cycles may be able to be provided which would be considered positive. As such, and as no details of the specifics of the storage facility have been provided, a condition will be imposed on any approval granted to ensure that adequate, or additional, cycle storage, of an appropriate design, is provided.

Environmental Issues

Water Conservation

28. Whilst this is not new housing development, given the property will be completely re-fitted internally, there is scope to incorporate water efficiency measures to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 as required by Joint Core Strategy Policy 3. As such, the standard water efficiency condition will be applied to any approval granted.

Local Finance Considerations

29. The Localism Act 2011 amended S70 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to require local planning authorities to have regard to local finance considerations in the determination of planning applications, alongside the development plan and other material considerations.

30. In this case the proposals, if approved, would generate council tax receipts as well as attracting new homes bonus.

Conclusions

31. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local authorities should promote the bringing back into use of empty houses and saved policy HOU18 of the Local Plan continues this approach stating conversions of larger houses should not impact on the character of the surrounding area, but should provide satisfactory defensible amenity space, and an appropriate density of housing. Whilst the proposal results in a net decrease in the number of bed spaces, the density is still considered acceptable, the form of accommodation is of a higher standard, and the knock-on impacts of the net reduction will have other positive benefits in terms of an acceptable provision of amenity space and servicing areas. The use of this property for residential purposes is considered to be complementary to the surrounding area and the highly sustainable location of the property, directly opposite the Unthank Road local centre, means that this is a highly appropriate location for residential conversion.

32. The site layout has been carefully considered and whilst the proposed new

extension to the rear of the property will result in the loss of some of the rear amenity space, the remaining areas are still considered acceptable. Refuse and cycle storage is provided and subject to compliance with conditions is considered acceptable. The application sees the demolition of an existing lean-to structure to the rear of the property. This structure is dilapidated and in need of substantial repair. As such its loss is considered acceptable. The new extension proposed to replace this lean-to is considered acceptable in terms of its scale and design. It remains subservient to the main dwelling, despite the significant increase in size. The materials proposed will match that of the existing property which is considered acceptable.

To approve Application No 11/02115/F 122 Unthank Road, Norwich and grant planning permission, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Standard time limit
- 2) In accordance with the drawings and details as submitted
- 3) Materials to match existing unless otherwise agreed in writing with the LPA
- 4) Details of:
 - a. New boundary treatments
 - b. New windows
 - c. New doors
 - d. Refuse and cycle stores
- 5) Provision of refuse and cycle storage prior to first occupation
- 6) Landscaping details of hard and soft landscaping.
- 7) Water efficiency measures to achieve level 4 CSH.

Informatives:

- 1) The applicant is advised that refuse and recycling bins should be purchased by the applicant prior to occupation in agreement with Norwich City Council City Wide Services.
- 2) The applicant is advised that any property numbering queries should be directed to Kay Baxter, Address Referencing Officer (Norwich City Council) (Mondays and Tuesdays only): Tel 01603 212468.
- 3) Considerate Constructors Scheme (see extract below).
- 4) The properties will not be eligible for parking permits

Reasons for Approval:

- 1) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local authorities should promote the bringing back into use of empty houses and saved policy HOU18 of the Local Plan continues this approach stating conversions of larger houses should not impact on the character of the surrounding area, but should provide satisfactory defensible amenity space, and an appropriate density of housing. Whilst the proposal results in a net decrease in the number of bed spaces, the density is still considered acceptable, the form of accommodation is of a higher quality, and the knock-on impacts of the net reduction will have other positive benefits in terms of an acceptable provision of amenity space and servicing areas. The use of this property for residential purposes is considered to be complementary to the surrounding area and the highly sustainable location of the property, directly opposite the Unthank Road local centre, means that this is a high appropriate location for residential conversion. Therefore the proposals are considered to be in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF, Policy 4 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland,

Norwich and South Norfolk (March 2011) and saved policy HOU18 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (Adopted Version November 2004).

- 2) The site layout has been carefully considered and whilst the proposed new extension to the rear of the property will result in the loss of some of the rear amenity space, the remaining areas are still considered acceptable. Refuse and cycle storage is provided and subject to compliance with conditions is considered acceptable. The application sees the demolition of an existing lean-to structure to the rear of the property. This structure is dilapidated and in need of substantial repair. As such its loss is considered acceptable. The new extension proposed to replace this lean-to is considered acceptable in terms of its scale and design. It remains subservient to the main dwelling, despite the significant increase in size. The materials proposed will match that of the existing property which is considered acceptable. Therefore the proposals are considered to be in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF policy ENV7 of the East of England Plan (May 2008), policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (March 2011) and saved policies HBE12, EP22, TRA7, TRA8 and TRA9 of the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan (Adopted Version November 2004).

Extract from 'Considerate Constructors Scheme' informative:

You are advised that the council expects the following measures to be taken during any building operations to control noise, pollution and parking:

(a) Work that is audible beyond the site boundary shall only be carried out between 7.30am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday, between 7.30am and 1.00pm Saturday and not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays;

(b) The quietest available items of plant and machinery shall be used on site. Where equipment such as generators are necessary, they should be enclosed to reduce noise levels, if applicable.

(c) Deliveries shall only be received within the hours detailed in (a) above.

(d) Adequate steps shall be taken to prevent dust-causing nuisance beyond the site boundary. Such steps include the use of hoses to damp down stockpiles of materials, which are likely to generate airborne dust, to damp down during stone/slab cutting; and the use of bowzers and wheel washes;

(e) There shall be no burning on site;

(f) Only minimal security lighting shall be used outside the hours stated above; and

(g) Building materials and machinery shall not be stored on the highway and contractors' vehicles shall be parked with care so as to not cause an obstruction or block visibility on the highway.

Any divergence from these recommendations should be referred to the council's environmental protection team (or highways team for matters which may affect highway safety) for approval. The council also recommends membership of a scheme, such as the Considerate Constructors Scheme.



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Planning Application No 11/02115/F
Site Address 122 Unthank Road
Scale 1:500



NORWICH
City Council

PLANNING SERVICES

