



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

DEV/SE/15/59

Development Control Committee

1 October 2015

Planning Application DC/15/1540/FUL

Abbott's House, 2 Newmarket Road, Bury St Edmunds

Date: 17 August 2015 **Expiry Date:** 12 October 2015
Registered:

Case Officer: Sarah Drane **Recommendation:** Approve

Parish: Bury St Edmunds Town **Ward:** Minden

Proposal: Planning Application- Change of use of existing Bed & Breakfast establishment to a House of Multiple Occupation

Site: Abbott's House, 2 Newmarket Road,
Bury St Edmunds IP33 3SN

Applicant: St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Synopsis:

Application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Associated matters.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Committee determine the attached application and associated matters.

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Background:

This application is referred to the Committee because St Edmundsbury Borough Council is the applicant. The application is recommended for approval.

Proposal:

1. Planning permission is sought for the changes of use of an existing 11 bedroom Bed and Breakfast establishment to a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). Only a minor external change is proposed on the west (side) elevation, reducing the size of one of the ground floor windows (presently serving a bedroom) serving a new accessible shower room. Internal works are proposed to create 7 units of temporary accommodation for families and pregnant women who have become in need of temporary accommodation whilst waiting for permanent rehousing. Four of the units will be for families (each with 2 connecting bedrooms), a double room, a single room and a disabled access room. Access and parking will remain as existing.
2. The application has been amended since submission altering the parking layout to ensure access can be maintained to the rear garden for bins. The number of spaces has reduced from 7 to 6. Additional cycle storage is also shown within the rear garden.

Application Supporting Material:

3. Information submitted with the application as follows:
 - Location plan
 - Existing and proposed floor plans
 - Site layout plan

Site Details:

4. The site is situated on Newmarket Road, within the settlement boundary of Bury St. Edmunds. Beetons footpath runs along the eastern boundary which links down to the sports centre and Council Offices. There are residential properties to the north and west and on the opposite side of Newmarket Road to the south. The town centre is approx. 1km to the east. The existing property is currently run as an 11 bed B&B, with vehicular access off Newmarket Road and parking for 6-7 cars to the rear. The rear garden is enclosed by a high brick wall along the eastern boundary, with pedestrian gate to allow bins to be put out. There is a hedge along the boundary with no. 4 and close boarded fence along the northern boundary. The front garden is largely enclosed by a hedge and low wall along the access.

Planning History:

5. None relevant.

Consultations:

6. Highway Authority: No objection subject to conditions

SCC Rights of Way: No comment

Public Health and Housing: No objection

SCC Fire & Rescue: No objection

Representations:

7. Town Council: No objection

8. A number of concerns have been raised by local residents, including a petition signed by 24 residents who all live along Newmarket Road. The concerns raised can be summarised as follows:

- Property should be returned to single residential dwelling
- Out of character with the local area
- Noise and disturbance from residents
- Site well known to the police in relation to disturbances
- Detrimental impact on residential amenity
- Anti social behaviour
- Many children pass this unsafe site along the adjacent footpath
- Conflict of increased use of access in such close proximity to the pedestrian crossing.
- Inadequate/faded road markings exacerbate road safety/access issues
- Proposals will fail to secure local residents basic Human Rights
- Who will supervise/manage the site?

Policy: The following policies of the Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015 and the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy December 2010 have been taken into account in the consideration of this application:

9. Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015:

- DM2 – Creating Places
- DM23 – Special Housing Needs
- DM46 – Parking Standards

10. St Edmundsbury Core Strategy December 2010

- CS3 – Design & Local Distinctiveness

Other Planning Policy:

11. National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- core principles

- Section 6 – Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- Section 7 – Requiring Good Design

Officer Comment:

Background Information

12. The purchase and conversion of Abbotts House goes a long way to achieving aims set out in two key Housing Strategies. The West Suffolk Housing Strategy states that;
"Within the lifetime of this (West Suffolk) Homelessness Strategy (2015-2018) we aim to:
- *minimise the use of bed & breakfast to the extent it is only used in an emergency and*
 - *ensure that enough suitable temporary accommodation is available and that it is in the right location for homeless households to access support, maintain employment and education."*
13. St. Edmundsbury Borough Council currently own one other house in multiple occupation in the Borough; 34 Lake Avenue in Bury St Edmunds. This has 5 bedrooms, 2 kitchens and 2 bathrooms accommodating single people and couples there. This property is not suitable as family unit accommodation. The Council purchased this property in 2014 as part of the drive to reduce bed & breakfast costs and provide more suitable temporary accommodation. The property has been leased to Anglia Care Trust who manage the property on behalf of the Council.
14. The purchase and conversion of Abbotts House would complete the need for temporary accommodation in Bury St Edmunds. The Homelessness Strategy (section 5) identified the need for 15 units in Bury St Edmunds. Abbotts House and Lake Avenue would provide 12 of those units. The other three units are provided through a nominations agreement with a Housing Association.
15. It is understood that the owner has accepted the offer from the Council to purchase the property which is subject to planning permission being secured.
16. The planning issues to be considered in the determination of the application are:
- Principle of Development
 - Access and parking
 - Impact on residential amenity

Principle of Development

17. This site falls within the settlement boundary of Bury St. Edmunds. The existing property is an established 11 bedroom B&B. The change of use to a house in multiple occupation (HMO) will not be significantly different to what is there at present – this is still a residential use and will raise similar impacts to those experienced as a result of its lawful B & B use. Only a minor external change is proposed on the west (side) elevation, reducing the size of one of the ground floor windows (presently serving a bedroom) serving a new accessible shower room. The principle of the

change of use of the building is therefore acceptable, but it is important to consider matters of detail in relation to access, parking and impact on residential amenity. These matters and those concerns raised by local residents will be assessed in detail below.

Access and parking

18. With the site currently operating as an 11 bed B&B, the existing access and parking arrangements (6-7 spaces) are considered adequate to serve the proposed HMO use. The applicant contends that the 6 car parking spaces shown will be more than sufficient for this HMO. The property will be used to provide temporary accommodation for homeless people. This client group is far less likely to have access to a car and are often reliant on public transport. Newmarket Road is well served by public transport and is within easy walking distance of both the town centre and the Council Offices. In the housing team's experience of managing homelessness temporary accommodation, (for example, Forest Heath's Homeless Hostel at Rockfield House, Bury Road in Newmarket and The Elms, High Street, Brandon) as few as a third of homeless households have access to a car. Abbotts House is presently an 11 bedroom B&B. The current parking provision has been sufficient for this number of bedrooms. The proposal to convert the building into 7 units for temporary accommodation will result in less demand for parking than that currently and should therefore result in less traffic movements using the existing access. The Highways Authority would normally require one parking space per unit of accommodation, but they have confirmed that given location of the dwelling (access to pedestrian/cycle routes and public transport), provision of satisfactory cycle parking and close proximity to local amenities within Bury St Edmunds, they have no objections to the proposals subject to conditions to secure the parking area shown, bin storage provision and improvements to visibility where the access meets the main road.

Impact on residential amenity

19. This is one of the key concerns raised by local residents. Abbotts House currently has 11 double and single bedrooms. Whilst the Council does currently place some homeless households there, the Council has no control over placements made there by other organisations or how the property is managed. The Council's Public Health and Housing team has, however, never received any complaints in relation to noise and disturbance at the property.
20. The Council's proposals would result in the property being converted into 7 units of temporary accommodation, predominately for families and pregnant women who have become in need of temporary accommodation whilst waiting for permanent rehousing, rather than individuals with complex issues who are understood to make up some of the current residents. It is not anticipated that the proposed client group would be a nuisance to other residents but this can never be discounted, just as disturbance from B & B guests arriving or departing from the property at potentially unsocial hours could likewise never be discounted either. The likely guests however would be families with the usual parental responsibilities, pregnant women or those with medical issues.

21. Whilst there would not be a Warden on site all the time, it is understood that no schemes of this type are staffed to this degree. Staff would be on-call 24 hours a day 7 days a week and would still respond to any issues that occur outside of normal working hours. The property would be managed by a Housing Organisation such as a Housing Association, employing professional staff. Should local residents have any concerns about residents or how the property is managed they would be able to contact the managing Housing Organisation or the Council 24/7. Local residents can be provided with names and contact numbers of Officers to assist direct communication. The property would be monitored by CCTV 24/7 so any issues occurring would be flagged up to the managing Housing Organisation to address promptly.

22. The Council would have full control over what residents are placed at the property and would be able to promptly end the stay of residents should they not comply with the terms under which they have agreed to stay there. In summary the property will be professionally managed, local residents will be able to report any concerns that arise and be assured that they will be addressed. With these safeguards in place, combined with the proposed client group, it is expected that there should be a lot less disturbance at the property than is presently experienced by local residents as a result of the private sector B & B use.

Conclusion:

23. In conclusion, the principle and detail of the development is considered to be acceptable and in compliance with relevant development plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation:

24. It is **RECOMMENDED** that planning permission be **Approved** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the following approved plans and documents:

Site location plan - 001

Proposed block plan - 002 rev B

Proposed Floor plan - 004 rev A

Accessible shower detail - 005

Proposed kitchen layout - 006

Proposed elevations - 008

Reason: To define the scope and extent of this permission.

3. The areas to be provided for storage of Refuse/Recycling bins as shown on drawing number 10406 002 B shall be provided in its entirety before the development is brought into use and shall be retained thereafter for no other purpose.

Reason: To ensure that refuse recycling bins are not stored on the highway causing obstruction and dangers for other users.

4. The use shall not commence until the area(s) within the site shown on drawing number 10406 002 B for the purposes of [LOADING, UNLOADING,] manoeuvring and parking of vehicles and cycle storage have been provided and thereafter that area(s) shall be retained and used for no other purposes.

Reason: To ensure that sufficient space for the on site parking of vehicles and cycles is provided and maintained in order to ensure the provision of adequate on-site space for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles where on-street parking and manoeuvring would be detrimental to highway safety to users of the highway.

5. The fence, wall or other means of frontage enclosure along the highway frontage of the site for a distance of 2 metres in a westerly direction from the existing access shall be reduced to 0.6 metres above the level of the adjacent carriageway or re-located to 2.4 metres from the carriageway edge before any development commences.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town & Country (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification) it shall be retained thereafter at or below that height.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in order to maintain intervisibility between highway users.

Documents:

All background documents including application form, drawings and other supporting documentation relating to this application can be viewed online:

<https://planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=NS99AOPDJJY00>

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