

TWC/2021/0594

Former New College Telford, King Street, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire
Change of use of former college (use class F1(a)) into supported accommodation consisting of 28no. self-contained units with associated staff facilities (use class sui generis) with associated internal and external alterations, including insertion of 2no. roof lights, 1no. window to rear elevation, replacement of existing boarding, installation of new disabled access ramp and handrails. Alteration to existing access (Full Planning Application) ***AMENDED DESCRIPTION***

APPLICANT

Jessop

RECEIVED

11/06/2021

PARISH

Wellington

WARD

College

THIS APPLICATION HAS BEEN REFERRED TO PLANNING COMMITTEE AS THE COUNCIL ARE THE LANDOWNER AND THE PROPOSAL IS A MAJOR APPLICATION (10 OR MORE UNITS).

Online planning file: <https://secure.telford.gov.uk/planning/pa-applicationsummary.aspx?applicationnumber=TWC/2021/0594>

1.0 SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 This report should be read in conjunction with the Listed Building Consent application TWC/2021/0595, and will cover all material planning and Listed Building matters.
- 1.2 In respect of the Full Planning Application it is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** subject to conditions and informatives.
- 1.3 In respect of the Listed Building Application it is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT LISTED BUILDING CONSENT** subject to conditions and informatives as set out under TWC/2021/0595.

2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The former New College building is located in King Street, Wellington. It was the former Girl's High School and was designated as a Grade II listed building in February 2020. The former buildings associated with the college have now been demolished and the wider site is the subject of a separate planning application.
- 2.2 Vehicular and pedestrian access is from King Street. This section of King Street is predominantly residential.

2.3 The building is a substantial red brick building and the site is fronted with a low brick wall and extensive planting along the boundary with King Street. The wall adjacent to King Street is also listed.

3.0 APPLICATION DETAILS

3.1 The application relates to the change of use of the existing building to form 28 one bedroom self-contained apartments for young homeless people. This accommodation is designed to offer accommodation for those finding themselves without a home for a temporary period (typically 1-2 years), providing some level of support and ensuring that residents are able to move on when they are ready, to more permanent accommodation that they will be able to manage on their own.

3.2 Whilst the accommodation would be self-contained there would also be a degree of support provided on site. Residents would not typically be car owners and may be seeking or entering their first job or completing a college course.

3.3 The development would also include communal facilities including a training room, laundry, staff management office, shared waste and recycling facilities, secure cycle storage, charging points and communal garden areas.

3.4 The use proposed is classified as sui generis as it doesn't fall within the recognised categories of residential accommodation. Ten car parking spaces are proposed and this is in line with the requirement for residential hostels (1 space per 4 bed spaces) and allow for staff spaces.

3.5 The application is accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Transport Technical Note
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment
- Bat Survey
- Bird and Bat Survey

4.0 RELEVANT HISTORY

4.1 There is a long site history associated with the previous use of the site as the Girl's High School and more recently as New College. This is not relevant to the consideration of this application.

4.2 TWC/2020/0387: Application for prior notification of proposed demolition of blocks B, D, H and J. Prior Approval Granted 09/06/2020.

4.3 TWC/2020/0859: Demolition of buildings B, D, H and J including the removal of a link building and installation of cladding (Listed Building application). Listed Building granted 27/11/2020.

- 4.4 TWC/2021/0876: Installation of temporary cladding to the rear of the building. Full Granted 27/11/2020.
- 4.5 TWC/2021/0595: Conversion of former college into supported accommodation consisting of 28no. self-contained units with associated staff facilities with associated internal and external alterations, including installation of 2no. rooflights, 1no. window to rear elevation, replacement of existing boarding, installation of new disabled access ramp and handrails (Listed Building Application) – Under consideration.
- 4.6 TWC/2021/0048: Outline application for up to 64no retirement apartments (Class C2), 10no retirement bungalows, 26no market dwellings (Use Class C3) and a community sports facility (Use Class E(d) with access and all other matters reserved. Relates to wider site – under consideration.

5.0 RELEVANT POLICY DOCUMENTS

5.1 National Guidance:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance

5.2 Local Development Plan:

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

SP1 Telford

SP4 Presumption in favour of sustainable development

HO1 Housing requirement

HO7 Specialist housing needs

NE1 Biodiversity and geodiversity

NE2 Trees hedgerows and woodlands

C1 Promoting alternatives to the car

C3 Implications of development on highways

C5 Design of parking

BE1 Design Criteria

BE4 Listed Buildings

BE10 Contaminated Land

ER8 Waste planning for residential developments

ER1 Renewable energy

ER11 Sewerage systems and water quality

ER12 Flood Risk Management

6.0 SUMMARY OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 6.1 Built Heritage: Support subject to conditions. The insertion of the new windows and the flat roof would cause minor harm through the removal of historic fabric, as would the replacement Hardie Plank fibre cement cladding. With regard to the new windows, we require further information including detail drawings showing the window profiles, fixings and finish. This could potentially be dealt with by condition. As to the cladding, we would prefer

timber cladding to enable this corner of the building to sit more comfortably alongside the traditional brick materials, however in these circumstances, we understand the desire to use a material which is as maintenance-free as possible. Given that the harm identified to the special historic and architectural character of the building would be at the low end of the less-than-substantial scale in NPPF terms, the alterations are deemed acceptable on balance as they will allow the building to be brought back into use. The proposal in its current form is broadly consistent with local policies BE1 and BE4 and the NPPF section 16.

- 6.2 Highways: Support subject to conditions. The site itself is to be served by an improved access arrangement onto King Street, initially proposed under planning ref. TWC/2021/0048, yet to be determined at the time of writing. This arrangement would need to be delivered by whichever development is implemented first, and as such the requisite access works will need to be conditioned as part of any subsequent approval of these proposals to secure their delivery.
- 6.3 Ecology: Support subject to conditions. There are no priority habitats present on the site and little in the way of amenity vegetation is present. The site is currently undergoing demolition of the modern school buildings which were previously present.
- 6.4 Healthy Spaces: Support subject to conditions.
- 6.5 Drainage: No comment
- 6.6 Shropshire Council Archaeology: No comment
- 6.7 Shropshire Fire Service: No comment.
- 6.8 Wellington Town Council: No objection. Proposed development was a good compromise and that the current façade of the building was being retained.

7.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 7.1 Cllr J Urey supports the proposals.

8.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Having regard to the development plan policy and other material considerations including comments received during the consultation process, the planning application raises the following main issues:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on heritage asset
- Highways and Access
- Ecology Issues
- Drainage
- Conclusion

8.2 Principle of Development

- 8.2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the development plan consists of The Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (TWLP). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out policy guidance at a national level and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 8.2.2 The site is a brownfield site located within the built up area of Telford where Policy SP1 where the policy presumption is in favour of development, subject to compliance with other relevant policies.
- 8.2.3 The proposal relates to the change of use of the existing building to form 28 units of self-contained accommodation with communal and support facilities. The accommodation would be transitional accommodation for homeless people to enable them to have stability and learn to support themselves.
- 8.2.4 This type of accommodation would enable, usually young people, to have their own accommodation and build up their ability to find employment and future housing with either a renting (social or market) or even to potentially purchase a property.
- 8.2.5 The proposed accommodation is located within a sustainable location with relatively good access to public transport and also facilities and employment opportunities.
- 8.2.6 The proposal meets an identified need and supports the existing accommodation already offered by the applicant across the local area.
- 8.2.7 In principle, subject to compliance with other local plan policies, the proposals comply with Policies SP1, SP4 and HO7.

8.3 Impact on heritage asset

- 8.3.1 s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This is also reflected in Policy BE4 and the NPPF.
- 8.3.2 Insofar as this report considers the merits of the listed building consent, due regard has been given to s16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 when considering application reference TWC/2021/0595.
- 8.3.3 The building the subject of this application is a Grade II listed building and designated heritage asset. The building is not located in a Conservation Area and there are no other designated assets affected by the proposal.

- 8.3.4 A Heritage Statement has been provided which describes the heritage values and significance of the asset. This sets out a very details analysis of the building and the history of the site.
- 8.3.5 The application will also be assessed against policies BE1: Design Criteria & BE4: Listed Buildings of the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, part 16.
- 8.3.6 In accordance with the NPPF (para 202) any harm to the significance of the heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification. The Council's Built Heritage Specialist has advised that the harm identified is at the low-level of 'less than substantial'. This needs to be balanced against the clear public benefits of the reuse of the building, including its restoration and securing its future. This includes demonstrating that the proposed use is the 'optimum viable use' i.e. that which is both viable and causes the least harm to the significance of the asset.
- 8.3.7 The proposed development includes the insertion of a number of rooflights for smoke ventilation, insertion of 4 new windows, new steps, handrails and fire escape door, installation of CCTV cameras, and installation of new cladding to the rear elevation. In addition, it is proposed to remove all roller shutters affixed to the building and the repair/reinstatement of the existing sash windows, plus the addition of 4 new timber sash windows. Externally, it is proposed to erect a new boundary fence. Originally this was shown to be close-boarded fencing and this was deemed to be harmful to the character and setting of the listed building. Following negotiations this has been replaced with railings and planting.
- 8.3.8 The insertion of the new windows and the flat roof would cause minor harm through the removal of historic fabric, as would the replacement Hardie Plank fibre cement cladding. With regard to the new windows, further information including detail drawings showing the window profiles, fixings and finish would be required and this could potentially be dealt with by condition. As to the cladding, given the historic nature of the building the preference would be for timber cladding to enable this corner of the building to sit more comfortably alongside the traditional brick materials. However, in this instance and given the nature of the proposed use for the building it is accepted that there is a desire to use a material which is as maintenance-free as possible. The harm arising from the proposals to the special historic and architectural character of the building would be at the low end of the less-than-substantial scale in NPPF terms. However, the alterations would enable the building to be brought back into use and the public benefits arising from the proposals would outweigh the identified harm. As such the proposals are considered to be acceptable in respect of the application for planning permission.
- 8.3.9 In addition to the works identified above, internal alterations are required to the listed building for which listed building consent only is required. These include the addition of blackout film to the central windows on Elevation D and to the windows and doors along the first floor corridor; the affixing of fire-rated panels to the backs of the corridor doors; the fixing shut of the corridor fan

lights; the installation of Gyproc IWL wall liner on the inside of the walls off the first floor corridor. These proposed works are considered acceptable conditions can ensure that the works would not result to damage to the building's features of special historic and architectural interest.

8.3.10 Additional internal works include the sub-division of the space which would harm the legibility of the building as a former school. This would be to the detriment of its special historic and architectural character. However, the approach to the sub-division has been sensitively done and will enable the building to be brought back into use. Again, these alterations would result in less than substantial harm at the lower end of the scale.

8.3.11 Following amendment and on the basis that the proposal represents the optimum viable use, it is concluded that low-level less than substantial harm to the setting of the listed building is outweighed by the significant public benefits including securing the reuse of the building for community use and the restoration of features of special architectural and historic interest. This balance is undertaken with due weight to statutory presumption in favour of preservation as set out in s66(1) in respect of TWC/2021/0594, and s16(2) in respect of TWC/2021/0595.

8.4 Highways and Access

8.4.1 The site will be served by the existing vehicular access off King Street. This access will need to be widened and upgraded to provide adequate access to the site. The plans have been assessed by the Highways Officer who raises no objection to this element of the proposals. However, it is noted that this access was originally proposed in respect of an application on the adjoining site (TWC/2021/0048 – not yet determined). Therefore, whichever scheme is commenced first will need to undertake the requisite works to the access and these can be secured by condition.

8.4.2 Internally, sufficient width has been provided to allow two-way movements, and appropriate space provided for the parking and turning of cars to allow them to access and egress in forward gear. There is however no space provided for the turning of larger vehicles within the site, with little/no scope to address this due to site constraints. Although the absence of turning for larger vehicles is undesirable, visits from larger vehicles will likely be infrequent and need not be fully accommodated in this instance.

8.4.3 A total of 10 parking spaces are proposed to serve the development. The proposed use is considered to fall within sui generis and there are no parking standards for this class due to the wide variety of uses covered. The closest equivalent would be residential hostels which require 1 space per 4 bed spaces. As such the proposals would require 7 spaces. It is proposed that one member of staff would be present on site at any time during the working day.

- 8.4.4 Given the nature of the proposed use car ownership is envisaged to be low. However, it is proposed to provide secure cycle parking and space for the parking of motorised two wheeler vehicles. Car parking spaces will be provided with electric charging points as advocated by Policy ER1: Renewable energy.
- 8.4.5 The site is located within a sustainable location with good access to a range of shops, employment opportunities and facilities. In addition, there are good public transport links providing access to other parts of Telford, Shrewsbury and further afield such as Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Wrexham.
- 8.4.6 On balance, given the nature of the proposed use and the sustainable credentials of the site it is considered that the proposed parking provision is sufficient to meet the needs of the site and would comply with Policy C5.

8.5 Ecology Issues

- 8.5.1 Local Plan Policy NE1 states that biodiversity and geodiversity will be protected, maintained and enhanced. Preliminary Ecological Surveys and Bat and Bird Surveys have been submitted and include recommendations. The Council's Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure Specialists have assessed these surveys and have no objection subject to conditions ensuring that the works are undertaken in accordance with an ecological mitigation strategy and method statement to ensure the protection of bats should any be found during the course of carrying out the restoration works on the building. As such the proposals are in accordance with Policy NE1.

8.6 Drainage

- 8.6.1 Policies ER11 and ER12 require development to give consideration to sewerage systems, water quality and surface water. The Council's Drainage Team have no objection to the proposals as it is not envisaged any change to the existing arrangements.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The proposal seeks to provide an appropriate reuse for the listed building, one that results in less than substantial harm at the lower end of the spectrum. The proposal provides self-contained accommodation for young people who have been homeless and are unable to get mainstream accommodation. The proposals represent the optimum viable use for the property.
- 9.2 Adequate parking is provided for the development given its type of use and sustainable location. Subject to conditions in respect of biodiversity no objections are raised to the proposals. No issues are raised in respect of drainage.

9.3 Having regard to the above considerations, the proposal represents a sustainable form of development and complies with the National Planning Policy Framework, together with relevant policies within the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan. In addition, consideration has been given to s16(2) and s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

10.1 Based on the conclusions above, it is recommended that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT FULL PLANNING PERMISSION** (with the authority to finalise any matter including conditions, or any later variations) subject to the following conditions:-

1. A04 Time limit – Full
2. C013 Parking and Turning
3. B049 Custom Highways condition – design and construction details of King Street access
4. B119 Archaeological recording
5. B121 Landscaping Design
6. C089c Works in accordance with Landscape & Ecological Management Plan
7. C109c Lighting Strategy
8. Use as applied for – short term supported accommodation
9. C38 Approved Plans