
Case Number	24/01058/FUL (Formerly PP-12942041)
Application Type	Full Planning Application
Proposal	Use of social club (Use Class Sui Generis) as 7 apartments (Use Class C3) with associated alterations including erection of single-storey side extension and dormer window to rear, provision of parking
Location	Chaucer Family Social Club 100 Chaucer Close Sheffield S5 9QE
Date Received	03/04/2024
Team	North
Applicant/Agent	Mr Paul Billings - C3 Architecture Planning And Design Ltd
Recommendation	Grant Conditionally

Time limit for Commencement of Development

1. The development shall be begun not later than the expiration of three years from the date of this decision.

Reason: In order to comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Approved/Refused Plan(s)

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in complete accordance with the following plans, except as may be specified in the conditions attached to this permission, which shall in all cases take precedence.

- Drawing No. 23-089-1 (Location Plan)
- Drawing No. 23-089-2 Proposed Site Plan)
- Drawing No. 23-089-4 (Proposed Plans and Elevations)

published on the 3 and 9 April 2024

Reason: In order to define the permission.

Pre Commencement Condition(s) – ('true conditions precedent' – see notes for definition)

Other Pre-Commencement, Pre-Occupancy and other Stage of Development Condition(s)

3. No demolition and/or construction works shall be carried out unless equipment is provided for the effective cleaning of the wheels and bodies of vehicles leaving the site so as to prevent the depositing of mud and waste on the highway. Full details of the proposed cleaning equipment shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before it is installed.

Reason: In the interests of protecting the free and safe flow of traffic on the public highway, it is essential that this condition is complied with before any works on site commence.

4. Details of all proposed external materials and finishes, including samples when requested by the Local Planning Authority, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before that part of the development is commenced. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to ensure an appropriate quality of development.

5. A comprehensive and detailed hard and soft landscape scheme for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any above ground works commence, or within an alternative timeframe to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.

6. Before any above ground works commence, or within an alternative timeframe to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, details of the proposed surfacing, layout and marking out of the car parking accommodation shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be used unless the car parking accommodation has been provided in accordance with the approved plans and thereafter such car parking accommodation shall be retained for the sole use of the occupiers of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory parking provision in the interests of traffic safety and the amenities of the locality.

7. Details of a suitable means of site boundary treatment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any above ground works commence, or within an alternative timeframe to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall not be used unless such means of site boundary treatment has been provided in accordance with the approved details and thereafter such means of site enclosure shall be retained.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenities of the locality.

8. Unless it can be shown not to be feasible or viable no development shall commence until a report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, identifying how a minimum of 10% of the predicted energy needs of the completed development will be obtained from decentralised and renewable or low

carbon energy, or an alternative fabric first approach to offset an equivalent amount of energy. Any agreed renewable or low carbon energy equipment, connection to decentralised or low carbon energy sources, or agreed measures to achieve the alternative fabric first approach, shall have been installed/incorporated before any part of the development is occupied, and a report shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to demonstrate that the agreed measures have been installed/incorporated prior to occupation. Thereafter the agreed equipment, connection or measures shall be retained in use and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: In order to ensure that new development makes energy savings in the interests of mitigating the effects of climate change and given that such works could be one of the first elements of site infrastructure that must be installed it is essential that this condition is complied with before the development commences.

Other Compliance Conditions

9. The car parking spaces shall be constructed and provided in the first phase of the development, and used for the parking of construction vehicles during the construction phase of the development.

Reason: To reduce the demand for on-street parking during the construction phase.

10. The development shall not be used unless the car parking accommodation has been provided in accordance with the approved plans and thereafter such car parking accommodation shall be retained for the sole use of the occupiers of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory parking provision in the interests of traffic safety and the amenities of the locality.

11. The development shall include the following biodiversity and ecology enhancements:-

- A minimum of eight trees (minimum extra heavy standard)
- Planted area(s) to include native plant species and consideration of planting for ecological function
- A minimum of two bat bricks and/or built-in boxes
- Built-in bird boxes to provide nesting and roosting opportunities on suitably-orientated walls.
- Hedgehog-friendly garden enclosures
- Bee brick/hotel

The above measures shall be provided within 3 months of the apartments being brought into use, and thereafter retained.

Reason: In the interests of enhancing the biodiversity of the site.

12. The side window to the shower room (Apartment 6) on the elevation of the building facing St Cecilia's Church shall be fully glazed with obscure glass to a minimum privacy standard of Level 4 Obscurity and no part of the window shall at any time be glazed with clear glass.

Reason: In the interests of the amenities of occupiers of the adjoining property.

13. The car parking spaces shall be constructed with porous/permeable materials.

Reason: To prevent water spilling onto the highway.

Attention is Drawn to the Following Directives:

1. The Local Planning Authority has dealt with the planning application in a positive and proactive manner and sought solutions to problems where necessary in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. It is noted that your planning application involves the construction or alteration of an access crossing to a highway maintained at public expense.

This planning permission DOES NOT automatically permit the layout or construction of the access crossing in question, this being a matter which is covered by Section 184 of the Highways Act 1980. You should apply for permission, quoting your planning permission reference number, by contacting:

Mrs D Smith
Highways Development Control
Vehicle Crossings
Howden House, 1 Union Street
Sheffield
S1 2SH

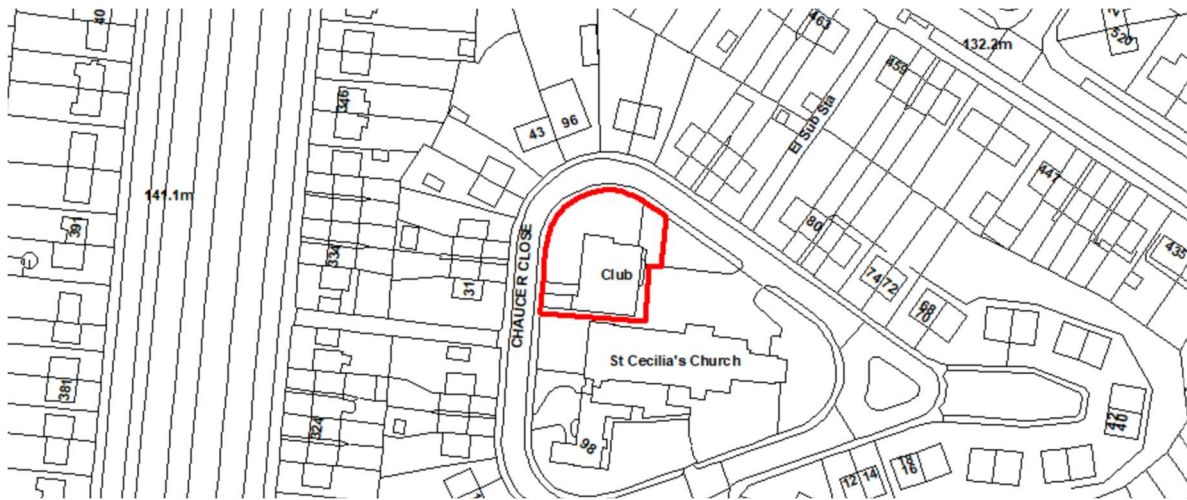
Tel: 07770 641 761

Email: dawn.smith2@sheffield.gov.uk

3. On the basis of the information provided to determine the application, it is considered that this planning permission is one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun.

Before commencing development, you should consider whether a Biodiversity Gain Plan needs to be submitted and approved. Commencing development which is subject to the biodiversity gain condition without an approved Biodiversity Gain Plan could result in enforcement action for breach of planning control.

Site Location



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LOCATION AND SITE CHARACTERISTICS

The former social club is situated along Chaucer Close, a road that arcs around the site along its western and northern boundaries. The building is linear in form, single storey in height and is constructed externally in brown brick with a concrete tiled pitched roof. Attached to the rear (eastern side) of the building is a single storey flat roofed off-shot.

The site is enclosed along its boundaries by dark green paladin fencing. The curtilage of the site is mostly laid to lawn with a small scattering of trees along the northern end of the site.

Chaucer Close is residential in character with a prevalence of two-storey semi-detached post war housing (both render and brick). To the immediate south of the site is a former church (St Cecilia's Church) with its associated car park to the east. The church is in the latter stages of being converted into 17 apartments pursuant of planning permission No. 16/04087/FUL.

The application site is situated in a Housing Area as identified on the UDP Proposals Map.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks full planning permission to convert the former social club building into 7 apartments with new single storey extension being added to its northern (side) and erection of rear box dormer window along the rear roof slope.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

23/04026/PREAPP - Pre-application advice: Use of former social club (Sui generis) to provide 7 apartments (one 2-bedroomed and 6 1-bedroomed) including rear box dormer and single storey side extension with off-street parking and associated landscaping – Closed 5 April 2024

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS

Twelve letters of objection have received in response to neighbour notification. A petition opposing the development proposal has also been received with 26 signatories.

A full summary of representations received is set out below:-

- Overcrowding: The proposed development will significantly increase the population density in an already overcrowded area. This will place undue pressure on local infrastructure, including schools, healthcare facilities, and public services, leading to a decline in the quality of life for existing residents.
- Environmental Damage: The development plans indicate the removal of several mature trees without adequate plans for replanting. These trees are vital for maintaining local biodiversity, reducing carbon dioxide levels, and providing shade and aesthetic value to the area. The loss of these trees will have a lasting negative impact on the local environment. The development of the church indicated that new trees would be planted however no new trees

have been planned. A big fear would be if the mature trees are removed and yet again no new ones will be planted. There has been significant loss of trees and a negative impact on the character of the neighbourhood, especially the loss of the open aspect of the neighbourhood. The development would have an effect on existing tree cover and landscape, with a loss of existing views from neighbouring properties adversely affecting the residential amenity of neighbouring owners.

- Biodiversity net gain (BNG) requires developments to leave the natural environment in a measurably better condition by insisting that all sites give back a 10% biodiversity uplift. The applicant believes that BNG does not apply. This is incorrect. The trees are vital for maintaining local biodiversity and reducing carbon dioxide levels. The loss of biodiversity will have a lasting negative impact on the local environment including the varied wildlife found in the locality.
- The development of the church meant the neighbourhood lost some mature trees, it was indicated that new trees would be planted but they have not.
- The construction and increased traffic associated with the new flats pose significant safety risks, particularly for children and the elderly. Increased vehicular movement can lead to a higher likelihood of accidents and make the area less pedestrian-friendly.
- Inadequate parking. The development plans do not provide enough parking spaces for the anticipated number of residents and visitors. This will inevitably lead to illegal parking, increased traffic congestion, and strained relationships among neighbours as they compete for limited parking spaces.
- Increased Anti-Social Behaviour: High-density housing developments often correlate with a rise in anti-social behaviour. This can include noise disturbances, littering, and vandalism, which would degrade the community's quality of life and increase the need for law enforcement intervention.
- Overdevelopment: The proposed flats represent overdevelopment of the site, which is out of character with the surrounding area. Such overdevelopment can lead to a 'concrete jungle' effect, reducing green spaces and negatively affecting the aesthetic and social fabric of the neighbourhood. Development is excessive in terms of demands on infrastructure and impact on local amenity and character, including the loss of the open aspect of the neighbourhood.
- There is already significant home building at the Beckett Hill site in the S5 9QN (approximate location) which will also contribute to pressure on local infrastructure. The area is overdeveloped with the recent creation of St Cecelia's church/flats has made things significantly worse.
- Health Impacts. The construction process and subsequent increase in traffic will contribute to higher levels of air and noise pollution. This is particularly concerning given the established links between pollution and various health conditions, including respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Existing residents, particularly those with pre-existing health conditions, will suffer from this deterioration in air quality.
- The proposed development is not in the best interest of the current residents and would have a profoundly negative impact on the community's environment, safety, and quality of life. The proposed development is not going to bring any improvement or benefit to the area.

- There are already issues with parking on Chaucer Close with the difficulty of refuse lorries, emergency vehicles etc accessing the area. Increased traffic associated with this development will not improve the area but only make it worse for the residents already living there.
- The best option would be to demolish the existing building and create a green space, with play area for children, which would benefit the local community more than yet another development.
- Reference is made to a previous planning application that was refused at 27 Chaucer Close: Ref. No: 90/01421/FUL.
- There is no need for further flats on Chaucer Close. There are 17 flats within the old church for which building works have been ongoing for 2 years. This has caused issues to many residents with parking, ambulances and fire engines have not been able to get through and a nightmare for parking.
- No one on Chaucer Close would want such extensive building works going on after having experienced this over the past two years with the other flats being built.
- Understand that there is a need for another use for the building as trying to run a pub in this day and age is difficult but changing the building into flats is not the answer.
- Chaucer Close has always been a quiet and peaceful road to live on. Since works starting on the church to build the apartments, no one has been able to park their own cars outside their own house and most residents already have to park their cars up onto the curb, forcing people to have to come off the public footpath and walk on the road. Adding more properties will only make parking worse.
- Any emergency services would struggle to gain access.
- Current tenants are actually looking elsewhere to live because of the changes being made.
- Sheffield City Council should be going door to door to get residents' opinions.
- This road is already considerably congested with cars and limited parking spaces. By dropping curbs and removing even more parking will be very concerning. It is currently unsafe for children to play out on the streets due to multiple cars on the road. Children will be forced to only play within their back gardens.
- Wheelchairs/scooters and pram users often have to walk on the road as cars are mounting the pavements which is a major safety concern.
- Some of the flats are not occupied, which suggests there is not a need or a market for more flats.
- The road has lost its community spirit and has problems with anti-social behaviour. Shouting and loud music most nights, and cars coming onto the close as if it is a racetrack. Concerns about anti-social behaviour.
- Since turning the church into flats it's caused nothing but issues and chaos for everyone involved. Constant closing of the road, noise disturbance, dust and mess from the conversion of the church into flats.
- The road has not been the same since the church was made into flats. Since St. Cecelia's church has been turned into flats there has been a significant downturn in what was originally a lovely area.
- The proposed development would cause an increase in pollution, particularly air pollution impacting residents with respiratory conditions. Exacerbate

preconditions and contributing to a decrease in quality of life. Research informs outcomes most strongly linked with exposure to air pollution include stroke, ischaemic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, and pneumonia.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The relevant development plan for the site is the Sheffield Local Plan which includes the Sheffield Core Strategy and the saved policies and proposals map of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

In terms of emerging development plan policy, Sheffield is currently in the process of drafting a new Local Plan 'The Sheffield Plan'. This plan was approved by the Council for submission to the Government in September 2023 and is currently at examination stage.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF was first published in 2012 and has subsequently been revised in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023 with the latest revisions published on the 20th December 2023.

Assessment of a development proposal also needs to be considered in light of paragraph 11 of the NPPF, which provides that when making decisions, a presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied, and that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date (e.g. because they are inconsistent with the NPPF), this means that planning permission should be granted unless:

- the application of policies in the NPPF which relate to protection of certain areas or assets of particular importance which are identified in the NPPF as such (for example SSSIs, Green Belt, certain heritage assets and areas at risk of flooding) provide a clear reason for refusal; or
- any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

In terms of paragraph 11, the Council is required to demonstrate a 4-year supply of housing (previously required to demonstrate 5 year) but the current 4-year housing land supply is 3.01 years. Consequently, the most important development plan policies for the determination of schemes which include housing should be considered as out-of-date according to paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF.

The proposal seeks to change the use of the former social club (Sui generis) into 7

apartments (Use Class C3) that would include alterations to the building and erection of a single storey side extension and rear box dormer window. In this instance, there are no protected areas or assets of particular importance as described in footnote 7 of paragraph 11 within the boundary of the application site.

The NPPF emphasises the importance of the delivery of housing, and that importance is heightened with the tilted balance engaged. The most relevant policies in respect of this application should therefore be viewed as out of date in line with paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF and, unless adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development, planning permission should be approved.

Set against this context, the development proposal is assessed against all relevant policies in the development plan and government policy contained in the NPPF.

It is considered that the main issues relevant to this application are:

- The Principle of Development – Policy and Land Use
- Loss of Community Facility
- Highway Matters
- Design and Layout
- Ecology and Landscape Matters
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Residential Amenity
- CIL Issues
- Other Issues
- Titled balance

The Principle of Development – Policy and Land Use

The application site is identified within the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan as a Housing Area. Under Policy H10 of the UDP housing is the preferred use of land.

The application site is located within an updated Residential Zone within the emerging Sheffield Plan, where Policy NC2 applies. Both the extant UDP policy and Sheffield Plan policy identify housing as the preferred use in this location. However, the draft plan carried limited weight at this stage.

The application should also be assessed against Core Strategy Policies CS24 and CS26. Policy CS24 relates to the use of previously developed land for new housing and states that priority will be given to the development of previously developed sites and that no more than 12% of dwelling completions be on greenfield sites between 2004/05 and 2025/26.

Core Strategy Policy CS24 is considered to be broadly consistent with the NPPF, which states at paragraph 123 that policies should set out a strategy for meeting need in such a way that 'makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land', and at paragraph 124 part (c) that planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes, and at part (d) to promote and support the development of under-utilised land and building, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing.

The NPPF defines previously developed land as land that is occupied by a permanent structure, including its curtilage and associated fixed surface. The proposal relates to the redevelopment of previously developed land (brownfield) with the social club building being a permanent structure and therefore would meet the NPPF definition of previously developed land as described above. The proposal to change the use of the building would therefore not conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS24 and government policy contained in the NPPF.

Core Strategy Policy CS26 relates to the efficient use of housing land. In parts of the urban area that are close to high frequency bus routes such as here, it details that the density should be in the order of 30-50 dwellings per hectare. The policy does allow allowances outside these ranges in instances where they achieve good design, reflect the character of an area or protect a sensitive area.

This policy is broadly consistent with government guidance contained in the NPPF.

Paragraph 128 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, that amongst other things, takes into account the identified need for different types of housing, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it. At paragraph 129 it goes on to say that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. In this context, it states at part c) of this policy that when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).

The proposal involves the reuse and extension of the club building to form 7 apartments on a site area of some 811 square metres. This would equate to a density of 86.3 dwellinghouses per hectare. As described, the recommended density for sites such as this, which are close to frequent bus routes is between 30-50 dwellings. The proposed density of the site would therefore exceed the recommended density range set out within Core Strategy Policy CS26. However, it is considered that developing the site at a higher density than the recommended density range set out in Core Strategy Policy CS26 can be justified in this instance given that the proposal relates to the reuse of an existing building for apartments rather than a housing scheme containing detached and semi-detached houses, which by their very nature tend to be built out at lower densities than residential apartment schemes. While officers acknowledge the high number of objections received to the application, many citing overdevelopment concerns, it is considered unreasonable to require the applicant to develop the site at a lower density, particularly as all the 7 one and two bedroomed apartments would exceed the minimum space standards. It is also considered that some weight should be given to a proposal that makes efficient use of a site that is situated within a sustainable established residential area at a time when the Council is unable to demonstrate a 4 year supply of deliverable site.

As such, it is considered that there is no policy conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS26 or government policy contained at paragraphs 128 and 129 of the NPPF, which seeks

sites are developed at an appropriate density that makes efficient use of land.

Also material in the assessment of this application is government policy contained at paragraph 70 of the NPPF, which recognizes that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and states at part (d) that to promote the development of a good mix of sites, local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites through decisions and give great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. The proposed development of this site would therefore satisfy the terms of paragraph 70 of the NPPF.

Having regard to the above matters, it is considered that from a land use perspective, the proposal to change the use of the building to provide 7 apartments is acceptable, and would not conflict with UDP Policy H10, Core Strategy Policies CS24 and CS26 or government policy contained in the NPPF at paragraphs 70, 128 and 129.

Loss of Community Facility

Development Plan policy in respect of community facilities is contained within UDP policies CF1 and CF2. Policy CF1 relates to the provision of new community facilities. Policy CF2 (Keeping Community Facilities) sets out that development which would result in the loss of community facilities will be permitted if:

- a) The loss is unavoidable and equivalent facilities would be provided in the same area; or
- b) The facilities are no longer required; or
- c) Where a change of use of a building is involved, equivalent accommodation would be readily available elsewhere.

The emerging Sheffield Plan maintains the protection of valued community facilities (including public houses and social clubs) and this is a material consideration. Policy NC13 requires evidence that: a) the facility is not viable; or b) equivalent alternative facilities would be available within a 10-minute walk (800m); or c) commuted sum is paid to provide the facility elsewhere. To accord with the emerging plan, it must be established whether the facility is valued, and this should be established through public consultation and evidence indicating whether the facility is well used by the community (Sheffield Plan, paragraph 4.45).

Although the UDP's definition of community facilities (pp169-170) is limited to uses in Use Class D1 usually provided by the public sector, the NPPF recognises the social benefits of public houses in promoting healthy and safe communities. Part a) to paragraph 97 of the NPPF states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments, with community facilities including local shops, meeting places, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

While the building is not specifically a public house for the purposes of paragraph 97, the building's former use as a social club is akin to a public house and therefore an

assessment is based upon whether the change of the use of the building would result in a loss of a community building that would harm the social cohesion of the local community.

The application was accompanied by a planning statement prepared by the applicant, which sets out the premises' unviability, and the attempts that have been made by the previous tenant(s) to keep the social club as an ongoing concern. These are summarised below:-

- The building was purchased from the Diocese in 2016.
- The club had experienced a chequered history, with previous spells of mismanagement and had been closed and reopened on several occasions, and at one point, was used as a craft shop/warehouse.
- While there was potential to continue the use as a social club and maximise the use of the larger room to a function room, it became evident that the business could not survive from the few local members brought to the venue.
- By utilising the function room and tighter controls the venue had a certain degree of success, but it was obvious it was never going to be able to become viable.
- One of the local pubs closed for a while for refurbishment and the club enjoyed an increase in trade for a short period of time, but soon lost that trade back once the pub reopened.
- The club was significantly affected by the opening of a "super pub" (Generous George) within 400 yards of the club. This pub being owned by a national brewer has a good offering and although not suitable to all of the club's patrons, a lot of business was lost to this venue.
- The club continued to have ups and downs up until COVID. Although there was lots of national and local support for the licensed trade the business has never recovered.
- The tenant made attempts during COVID to refurbish the premises by using grants and bounce back loans, but unfortunately coming out of COVID many people have changed their lifestyle and drinking and socialising habits.
- Along with increasing beer prices, increasing utility bills left the tenant unable to viably operate the premises, and the tenant handed back the keys in September 2023.
- The club no longer has a liqueur licence.
- There is limited to no future for this social club as a licensed premises with the smaller operator unable to compete with the national pub groups.
- If the building is kept, it would no longer be used as a club but instead would be used for storage purposes.

It is evident to officers that the owner of the premises and his tenants have attempted to continue the use of the building as a social club, but despite concerted efforts it is considered that the loss of the social club is unavoidable, and that an alternative use of the building should be secured. It is considered that there are a number of equivalent facilities within walking distance of the site that can readily cater for the social club that would be lost through the building's redevelopment for housing. To illustrate this, the applicant has provided a list of similar or alternatives facilities that are within 5-10 walk of the site. These include Eighty-Foot Way (2 Chaucer Road), the Colley Club (2 Margetson Road), Wordsworth Tavern (Wordsworth Avenue) and the Fox and Hounds

(250 Foxhill Road). It is also material in officers' view that limited responses have been made to the desire to retain the building as a social club or its importance to the local community.

It is considered that there is no policy conflict with UDP Policies CF1 and CF2 or government policy contained in the NPPF at paragraph 97.

Highway Matters

UDP Policy H14 sets out at part (d) that in Housing Areas, new development will be permitted provided that it would provide safe access to the highway network and be provided with appropriate off-street parking and not endanger pedestrians.

These policies are not fully consistent with government policy contained in the NPPF, which states at paragraph 115 that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. The requirement to provide appropriate off-street parking is not therefore reflected in the NPPF, with government policy suggesting that the shortfall of off-street parking within a scheme should only be refused in instances where this would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety or lead to severe impacts on the road network.

As described, the proposed apartment scheme would be allocated with 8 off-street parking spaces, which are indicated on the supporting site layout plan (Drawing No. 23-089-2 Revision B). Each apartment would be allocated one parking space with one additional off-street parking.

The applicant has submitted a supporting letter in an attempt to address some of the concerns raised by the objectors, particularly in terms of parking but also in terms of the health and safety and anti-social behaviour concerns. This letter details that the owner of the adjacent apartment scheme (St Cecilia Apartments) has formally agreed with the applicant that the existing car park provided for the church scheme (which is less than half full despite the apartment scheme being fully let) can be used by contractors during construction works. The applicant is also agreeable to construct the required parking spaces first to ensure that site contractors are able to park off-street to reduce any demand for on-street parking during construction works. The letter also details that the previous use of the building had no parking and that when the club was in use, which included functions resulted in greater impact on parking than what would occur with the proposed use since all the apartments being allocated with one parking space. It is clear from this that the applicant has sought solutions to the objections raised and while it would be beneficial to use the adjacent car park during the construction phase, as this car park lies outside the ownership/control of the applicant, it would be difficult to secure this requirement by planning condition. It would however be beneficial that the car parking spaces shown on the proposed site plan are provided as part of the first phase of the development to allow construction vehicles to be brought off the highway.

Highway Section are satisfied with the proposed number of spaces (8 in total) to serve the apartments and that the distribution of the spaces as shown on the site plan would not unduly harm highway safety along Chaucer Close when reversing out onto this highway. Highways have stated that the composition of the development is not

orientated to a high demand for parking in connection with the apartments, which is not large family properties that generate a high car ownership profile. Also, most of the existing properties on the opposite side of the Close have their own off-street car parking accommodation, and whilst the proposed dropped kerbs to the parking bays would remove some existing on-street car parking opportunity, officers remain satisfied that any demand for on street parking would be low.

Despite the number of objections citing highway concerns, from a highway perspective, the proposal is considered to be acceptable, and whilst there would undoubtedly be some disruption to local residents during the construction phase, it would be unreasonable to refuse the application on highway grounds. The level of on-site parking provision is unlikely to lead to any significant demand for on-street parking along Chaucer Close that would prejudice highway safety. Concerns raised by residents in terms of parking provision, restricted access both at construction stage and post occupation and child safety are noted but are not substantive in nature that places doubts over the suitability of developing this site for housing on highway safety grounds. The applicant's agreement with the owner of St Cecilia's Apartments to utilise the existing car park should help to alleviate any potential parking problems during the construction works.

As described, paragraph 115 of the NPPF details that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Given the modest scale of the development (7 apartments through the re-use of the building), officers are satisfied that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in the cumulative impacts on the road network being severe.

Design and Layout

The proposed development should be assessed against UDP Policies BE5 and H14 and Core Strategy Policy CS74. Policy BE5 requires development to incorporate good design, the use of good quality materials and encourages original architecture. UDP Policy H14 relates to conditions on development in Housing Areas. It details at part (a) that new buildings and extensions should well designed and in scale and character with neighbouring buildings. This policy also details at part c) that the site would not be overdeveloped or deprive residents of light, privacy or cause serious loss of existing garden space which would harm the character of the neighbourhood.

Core Strategy Policy CS74 states that high quality development will be expected, which would respect, take advantage of and enhance the distinctive features of the City, its districts and neighbourhoods.

These policies are broadly in line with the NPPF (paragraph 131) which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, while paragraph 135 states that development should contribute towards creating visually attractive, distinctive places to live, work and visit, whilst also being sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

The social club building is linear in form with its principal outlook facing east-west, single storey in height and is faced up externally in brown brick with a concrete tiled pitched roof. Attached to the rear (eastern side) of the building is a single storey flat roofed rear off-shot. The building is situated close to the site's eastern and southern boundaries with a stand-off distance to Chaucer Close of between 9m-11.4m.

Alongside the proposed change of use of the social club for residential use, approval is being sought for external alterations to the building including new door and window openings, the addition of a single storey side extension and flat roofed box dormer along its eastern roof slope. The proposed side extension would be attached along its northern elevation to Chaucer Close, measure 4m by 4m (external footprint) with a dual pitched roof that would be subservient to the building's main ridge by some 300mm. The materials of the extension would match the existing building. The proposed box dormer would be erected along the most part of the building's eastern roof slope to provide upper floor accommodation. The dormer would be recessed slightly from each end and be set just below the building's ridgeline.

While new openings are proposed, the re-use of the social club for residential use would primarily utilise the building's existing openings for outlook and light, which is considered the correct approach in terms of its conversion. Officers' are also satisfied with the appearance of the proposed rear box dormer enlargement, which is shown to be externally finished in dark grey/black cladding panels/eternity tiles to help 'soften' its visual appearance. It is considered that the building can accommodate the dormer without appearing overly dominant, with the dormer facing towards the adjacent car park, and while views of the dormer would be visible given the road layout, it is not considered that there are reasonable design grounds for it to be resisted on design grounds.

It is also considered that the proposed single side extension is acceptable from a design perspective. As described, the extension is shown to be constructed with a dual pitched roof that would sit below the main building to form a subservient element to the main building and be constructed of matching materials used on the main building. While the extension would extend the linear form of the building towards Chaucer Close, this can be justified in officers' view as there is no 'building line' to protect along this section of the highway, the proposal would not appear unacceptably prominent to an extent that would be harmful to streetscene. The proposed site layout plan shows that an approximate 5m buffer would still be retained between the northern end of the extended building and back edge of highway that would be softened by proposed new tree planting.

Based on the above, it is considered therefore that the proposal would satisfy UDP Policy H14, Core Strategy Policy CS74 and government policy contained at paragraph 135 of the NPPF.

Ecology and Landscape Matters and Biodiversity Net Gain

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF sets out that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment through measures that include a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity, and d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological

networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

The application site is limited in terms of ecological value with the site comprising an area of lawned grass and a small clutch of three trees towards the north-eastern side of the site. As part of the redevelopment of the site, the plans show the removal of part of the lawned area and the loss of the three trees to provide for the proposed car parking and new side extension, with the removal of the trees compensated by further tree planting across the site.

While no tree survey was carried as part of the supporting submission, in officers' view, the trees whilst providing some amenity value to the surrounding area are not high quality specimens that make a significant contribution to the amenity of the area. It is considered that the loss of the trees (2 in total) can be justified in this instance to enable the redevelopment of the building and site for housing, subject to replacement tree planting as described.

In terms of biodiversity net gain, the applicant appointed Weddles Landscape Architecture to undertake a baseline assessment (Small Sites Statutory Defra Biodiversity Metric) of the site, which included a walkover carried out on the 30 April 2024. This assessment calculated that the site in its current state has a baseline figure of 0.2759 habitat units. Through on-site ecology enhancements that would include the planting of 8 trees and the planting and enhancement of Modified Grassland as set out within the BNG Report Summary, the habitat unit figure would be increased to 0.3225, amounting to a percentage uplift of 16.88% from the baseline figure. As such, the applicant has therefore successfully demonstrated that the statutory 10% net gain in biodiversity has been met.

In addition to the on-site ecology enhancements, there is also opportunity to provide further enhancements in the interests of biodiversity, and it is recommended that a condition be attached that secures bat bricks and bird boxes, hedgehog friendly enclosures and native species planted areas and hedging.

By demonstrating a 16.88% uplift in biodiversity across the site would be achieved, it is considered that the policy objectives of paragraph 180 of the NPPF would also be met.

Sustainability

Core Strategy Policies CS63, CS64 and CS65 of the Core Strategy, as well as the Climate Change and Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), set out the Council's approach to securing sustainable development.

Policy CS63 gives priority to developments that are well served by sustainable forms of transport, that increase energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption, carbon emissions and that generate renewable energy.

Core Strategy Policy CS65 relates to renewable energy and carbon reduction, and states that all significant developments will be required, unless this can be shown not to be feasible and viable to provide a minimum of 10% of their predicted energy needs from decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy. An equivalent 10% reduction in a development's energy needs from a fabric first is also acceptable (although not

referenced in the policy). For the purpose of Policy CS65, significant developments applies to new build and conversions with a gross internal floorspace of more than 500 square metres or 5 or more dwelling (including apartments).

These policies are considered to be consistent with government policy contained in the NPPF and should be afforded significant weight. Paragraph 162 confirms new development should comply with development plan policies for decentralised energy supply unless it is not feasible or viable having regard to the type and design of development proposed. Landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping should also be taken into account to minimise energy consumption. The NPPF goes on to say at paragraph 164 that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights).

The application site is close to good public transport links and local services, all being within walking distance of the site. The re-use of this build would meet local and national policy aims and objectives in terms of supporting the redevelopment of previously developed land (brownfield sites) in sustainable locations.

The application is absent in terms of how a minimum of 10% of the predicted energy needs from the development would be derived from renewable, low carbon energy or through a fabric first approach. To comply with Core Strategy Policy CS65, it is therefore recommended that a condition be attached that secures the policy requirements.

Residential Amenity

UDP Policy H14 relates to conditions that new development or change of use proposals in Housing Areas are required to meet. Part (k) states that new development should not lead to air pollution, noise, excessive traffic levels or other nuisance for people living nearby.

This policy is broadly in line with government policy contained in the NPPF, where it states at paragraph 135 part (f) that decisions should ensure developments create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

In terms of amenity standards, as described above, the NPPF states that planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, and states at paragraph 129 part (c) that when considering applications for housing, authorities should take a flexible approach in applying policies or guidance relating to daylight and sunlight, where they would otherwise inhibit making efficient use of a site (as long as the resulting scheme would provide acceptable living standards).

Also relevant is government policy contained at paragraph 191 of the NPPF, which states that decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the

site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life, as well as protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed.

As described, the site is encircled by housing across Chaucer Close to its north and west, and lies adjacent to St Cecilia's Church, which has been converted to form 17 apartments.

From officer's site visit and inspection of the supporting plans, it is not considered that the proposal to repurpose the building into apartments would lead to any significant harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring properties including the apartments within the adjacent conversion scheme. The majority of the proposal will be housed within the existing building and the impact of the scale and siting of the building is well established. The small extension is set away from surrounding properties to such an extent that it will not result in an adverse impact.

All main windows of the apartments would face towards either Chaucer Close or the car park of the neighbouring residential development, and not towards any neighbouring properties that would impact on privacy or outlook. While a window is situated within the building's side (southern) elevation facing St Cecilia's Church that would serve a kitchen, this is a galley kitchen (not a main room) where occupants are unlikely to spend any significant amount of time.

In terms of the living conditions of the proposed apartments, officers are satisfied that the residents would all be afforded with adequate outlook and light and would meet the national prescribed space standards. Whilst the distance between the rear of the site and the adjacent car park area is small, the application property is set on higher grounds, such that windows will not experience an unacceptable loss of privacy from users of the car park, subject to suitable boundary treatments.

The proposal also includes a small garden amenity area, which is shown on the supporting plans as being landscaped for the future benefit of the apartments' future residents for occasional recreation and leisure use.

CIL Issues

The Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to provide infrastructure to support new development.

The development is located within an area where CIL is not liable.

Other Matters

While concerns have been raised with regard to anti-social behaviour, a reason for refusal could not be substantiated on these grounds. There is no evidence that the proposed apartment would result in anti-social behaviour or be detrimental to the social cohesion of this residential neighbourhood.

It is noted that several objectors raise concerns that the proposed development would exacerbate the existing infrastructure and service problems within the area, placing more strain on doctor appointments, school places and dentists etc within the area.

These are considered valid concerns but not just specific to this area, but due to the modest scale of the development (7 apartments), it is considered that the demand that would be placed on the area's local infrastructure and essential services would not be severe. As discussed above, the Council requires developers in CIL liable areas to pay a levy that is used by the Council to help deliver the infrastructure and essential services needed to support development in their area that could include school places and medical service provision. While officers acknowledge the concerns raised, there are no substantive grounds to give significant weight to the perceived harmful impact on local health services and school place provision that the development would bring.

Tilted Balance

As described above, the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 4-year supply of deliverable housing sites with the supply of deliverable housing sites currently equating to only 3.01 years. Consequently, the most important Local Plan policies for the determination of schemes which include housing should be considered as out-of-date in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF. The so called 'tilted balance' is therefore triggered, and planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

In this instance, there are no protected areas or assets of particular importance and the proposal would deliver a number of benefits as highlighted below. The NPPF emphasises the importance of delivery of housing, and that importance is heightened with the tilted balance engaged in this case, such that the recommendation to support the proposed development is strengthened.

The application site is situated in a Housing Area where housing is the preferred use of land. The principle of converting the building to form 7 apartments should therefore be viewed as acceptable when assessed against UDP Policy H10, Core Strategy Policies CS24 and CS26, and government policy contained in the NPPF that relates to the delivery of housing in sustainable locations. The applicant has demonstrated to officers' satisfaction that numerous efforts have been made from the owner of the building to retain the social club as an ongoing concern but without success. While its loss as a drinking establishment is regrettable, it has been found that there are alternative and equivalent facilities within walking distance to the site that would compensate for its loss and have a minimal impact on the community's cohesion.

It is acknowledged that there has been a high level of objection to the application including a signed petition, but as discussed within the report, it is considered that the proposal would not lead to any unacceptable impact from a highway perspective with sufficient onsite parking that would meet the likely parking demands of the apartments and that there are no substantive planning grounds to refuse the application on matters relating to anti-social behaviour and noise disturbance through the introduction of a

further apartment scheme within the Close. The proposal seeks to repurpose a vacant building for housing with the apartments comprising good space standards that would not lead to any significant overlooking or loss of outlook to the detriment of neighbouring properties. The proposal does involve the loss of trees, but these trees (none of which are of high amenity value) would be compensated by further tree planting and additional landscaping and ecological enhancements.

The proposal involves the erection of 7 apartments at a time when the Council is unable to demonstrate a 4 year supply of deliverable housing sites. While this provision would only make a modest contribution to the supply of housing, it is considered that this provision should be given substantial weight in the planning balance and that any impacts of granting the application are not significant that would demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The application relates to the former Chaucer Family Social Club in Southey.

Full planning permission is being sought to convert the former social club building into 7 apartments with new single storey extension rear and box dormer window.

For the reasons set out in the report and having regard to all other matters, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable and would be in general accordance with UDP Policies H10, H14, BE5, Core Strategy Policy CS74 and government policy contained in the NPPF.

It is therefore recommended that full planning permission be approved subject to the conditions listed.

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