

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/22/93876

Site Address: BASSETT HOUSE, 36 LEIGH ROAD, EASTLEIGH, SO50 9DT

Case Officer: Gary Osmond

Description: Conversion of existing offices to a Sui Generis HMO, including ground and first floor rear extensions and alterations to the roof, including raising the ridgeline and provision of dormers to provide second floor accommodation, together with ancillary amenity space, parking, bin and cycle storage.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Within Built-up area Boundary - Close to Eastleigh's Commercial Centre/Town Centre - Within the Urban Renaissance Quarter		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Z/18257/006/00	Single storey rear extension	Approved May 1995
Z/18527/005/00	Change of use to offices	Approved May 1986
Z/18257/004/00	Single storey rear extension	Approved Sept 1984
Z/18257/003/00	Ground floor rear extension	Outline approval Jan 1984
Z/18257/002/00	Two storey rear extension	Refused Aug 1983
Z/18257/001/00	Change of use from residential to offices	Refused Apr 1982
Z/18257/000/00	Extension and conversion into four self-contained flats	Refused Apr 1978

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☐	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	None received.		
Eastleigh Town Council:	No comments received (consultation prior to ETC being established).		
Hampshire Highways:	No objection in principle. Some concern at parking numbers and lack of allocation which would result in overspill and conflict. Parking permits will not be issued to new residents. Cycle storage is encouraged.		
Environmental Health:	Request conditions relating to noise insulation and mechanical ventilation due to proximity of Leigh Road. Internal sound insulation between rooms and floor will also be required to limit disturbance.		
Housing:	No objection. Rooms and facilities all meet size requirements. The proposed internal layout is not ideal and could result in disturbance between rooms and communal areas.		
Natural England:	Objection on grounds of impact upon New Forest SPAs and phosphorous impact on the Solent.		

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 24/11/2022		

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are Strategic policies S1 and S2; and Development Management policies DM1, DM2, DM11, DM14 and E4.

Supplementary Planning Documents:

Quality Places; Residential Parking Standards; Character Area Appraisals.

Assessment:**Proposals:**

The application seeks consent for the change of use of the building from office to a nine bedroom House of Multiple Occupation (HMO). This will require a modest increase in the width of the existing ground floor flat roof rear extension, together with a first floor rear twin gabled extension and alterations to the roof – raising the ridgeline, changing from hipped to full gabled ends, and provision of a large full width dormer to the rear. External works include the provision of a communal garden to the rear/side of the building, together with up to four parking spaces to the rear and a single space to the front, access from an existing dropped kerb. Bin storage will be to the rear, with a set of cycle sheds along the side of the building.

Policy & Principle:

The application site lies within the urban edge where the basic principle of development is acceptable. The site also lies within the Eastleigh Town Urban Renaissance Quarter where Policy E4 of the Local Plan is relevant. This policy states that the "...Council will encourage well-designed, people-intensive development that raises the quality of the main approaches to Eastleigh town centre..." and that the area should contain a mix of residential, commercial, retail, health and leisure facilities.

In principle therefore the proposed change of use to residential is acceptable, with any final approval being based upon the exact details of that proposed and its impact upon the surrounding area and neighbouring uses.

Design, Street Scene & Area Character:

The proposed alterations to the roof will alter the appearance of the building when viewed from Leigh Road, however, the change in form and increased ridge height will not result in the roof appearing out of proportion to the rest of the building and will still be lower than the ridge heights of the two neighbouring buildings, which are flat blocks converted from offices. In terms of the Leigh Road street scene, that proposed is acceptable. It is also proposed to reinstate a brick boundary wall to the street frontage which is welcomed.

The alterations and additions to the rear of the building are more functional than beautiful but are nonetheless acceptable and not out of place given the surrounding context of the locality.

The surrounding area is mixed in nature, as highlighted by being within the Renaissance Quarter, consisting of commercial and residential uses, albeit over recent years many properties have been converted back into residential use from office. As such the conversion to residential is not considered to result in any harm to the general character of the surrounding area.

Amenity:

Conversion to residential use should not have any adverse impact upon the amenity of any neighbouring uses in terms of intensity of use, with both immediate neighbouring properties also being in residential use. There will be some impact upon light and outlook to the bedrooms of two neighbouring flats at No.38 – to the west of the site. However, these windows are already impacted to some degree by the existing flank wall of the current building, meaning that the resulting impact of that proposed will be little different. It is also the case that these windows serve bedrooms rather than main living spaces, so do not need to be as protected from impact. Whilst not ideal, the harm caused is not considered to be sufficient enough to warrant a reason for refusal on these grounds.

With regards to the amenity of future occupiers, the concerns of Environmental Health are noted regarding the impact of noise and air quality resulting from traffic along Leigh Road,

however, no formal assessment has been requested or objection raised. Notwithstanding these concerns, were the proposed conversion to be undertaken via Class 'O' of the GPDO, the only noise consideration that can be taken into account relates to that from neighbouring commercial uses, not traffic. As such it would be unreasonable in planning terms to include a condition requiring specific sound insulation measures or the provision of mechanical ventilation. However, an advisory note will be included, as was the case with conversion of the two neighbouring properties from office to residential in 2014 & 2015.

In terms of internal accommodation, whilst the concerns raised by the Council's Housing team are noted, the issues raised are matters for the HMO licence which will be required, rather than this planning application. In planning terms, all bedrooms are of a reasonable size and have access to natural light, most with a reasonable outlook. There is also a large communal kitchen/diner for use of residents, as well as a good size enclosed external amenity area to the side/rear.

Parking & Highways:

The application proposes up to four off-road parking spaces to the rear of the site accessed from the rear service road which is shared with the neighbouring flat blocks and accessed from Toynbee Road. To accord with the Council's 'Residential Parking Standards' SPD the resulting nine bedroom dwelling would require a minimum of three off-road spaces – the SPD not differentiating between a 'normal' dwelling and an HMO – which can easily be provided by that proposed. The comments raised by Hampshire Highways in relation to the number of spaces and how they are allocated is noted. However, it is not possible for the site to accommodate a space per bedroom in this instance and is considered to be a slightly unreasonable request given the close proximity of the site to the town centre and nearby facilities. How the spaces are allocated between residents will be an issue for the landlord, as overflow parking into neighbouring streets is not considered to be a significant issue given all are subject to parking permit restrictions. The space to the front however is to be specifically allocated to the front ground floor bedroom (Bedroom 1) so as to prevent unacceptable disturbance from vehicle movements, headlights, slamming doors, etc.

In terms of highway impact, the conversion too residential should result in less highway trips than the current office use. As such it is not considered there would be any adverse issues in terms of highway impact.

Trees & Nature Conservation:

There are no trees on or adjoining the site which would be impacted by the proposals, nor are there any ecological concerns directly associated with the site.

Habitat Regulations

The objection raised by Natural England is noted. However, it is the view of the Council, as Competent Authority, that suitable mitigation can be provided in relation to the impact upon water quality of the Solent, as well as increased recreational pressure resulting from the development upon the Solent and New Forest SPAs. Mitigation schemes have been set up by the Council which the applicant has confirmed they will be using and to which they have provided contributions. A condition preventing any development from commencing for 21 days following consent being granted is also recommended to accord with the requirements of Section 281(6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is

underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environmental Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and emerging plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and emerging plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Emerging Local Plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications

Conclusion:

Recommendation:	PERMIT ☒	REFUSE ☐
-----------------	---	--

For the reasons set out above, the application is recommended for approval subject to conditions relating to the following:

- Approved drawings;
- Commencement within three years;
- No works within 21 days;
- Materials to match;
- Construction hours;
- Provision of nitrates and phosphate mitigation prior to occupation;
- Provision of bin and cycle storage prior to occupation;
- Provision of parking prior to occupation;
- Parking for bed 1; and
- Provision of hard and soft landscaping, including boundary wall to front prior to occupation.