

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/24/98502

Site Address: 19 STATION ROAD, NETLEY ABBEY, SOUTHAMPTON, SO31 5DU

Case Officer: Gary Osmond

Description: Subdivision of existing three bedroom dwelling into 2No. one bedroom flats, with ancillary bin and cycle storage

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Within the urban edge - With a Conservation Area		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
Various display of signage/advert applications but no planning applications are on record.		

Concurrent Planning Applications:	
72 New Road	PN/24/98548 – Application for Prior Approval for the change of use from Class E (commercial) to 1No. one bedroom and 1No. two bedroom flats (Use Class C3), under Class MA of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order – Refused Dec 2024
72 New Road	F/24/98526 – Change of shop window and insertion of rear door – Approved Jan 2025

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	Five representations have been received all objecting to the application on the following grounds: - No parking provision to serve the development - Will add to existing parking pressures in the locality - Insufficient parking in the locality to serve the development - Highway safety - Loss of a family home - Does not take into account concurrent proposals to convert neighbouring shop units into flats		
Hound Parish Council:	HPC objects on Policy DM1 over-development, lack of parking and loss of a 3 bedroom family home to create 2 flats.		
Heritage:	No objection from a conservation perspective. However, the internal arrangement proposed will not provide the best quality accommodation.		
Ecology:	This site is in a green impact risk zone for great crested newts, but just on the edge of an amber zone. There are records of bats, nesting swifts and hedgehogs nearby. The works do not involve any extension of the building, so qualifies for the de-minimus exemption for 10% biodiversity net gain, however some biodiversity enhancements are still required in accord with Local Plan policy DM 11 and NPPF paragraph 180. A bat box and a swift nest box may be appropriate for this building.		

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 09/12/2024 – See separate photographs		

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, DM12, DM13, DM14 and DM30. Supplementary Planning Documents: Quality Places; Residential Parking Standards; Netley Abbey Conservation Area Appraisal

Assessment:
Context: The application site lies close to the crossroads of Station Road and New Road, within the Netley Abbey Conservation Area and just outside the Station Road Local Centre. Station Road is the main road through Netley Abbey which provides access to Bursledon and Hamble-le-Rice to the north and east. New Road is a secondary road which runs parallel to Victoria Road, which provides access to Southampton to the north and the popular Royal Victoria Country Park to the south. This part of Netley is one of the original parts of the village, which grew significantly during the Victorian era to provide homes and services associated with those working at the former Military Hospital, the site of which now forms the country park. Netley is predominantly residential in nature, although the immediate area around the application site is more mixed, given the shops and services of the local centre. The site itself is a two storey Victorian dwelling, probably once associated with No.72 New Road which was formerly a bank. The building is red brick with buff brick detailing, under a fully hipped slate roof. It fronts directly onto Station Road, having no front garden unlike neighbouring cottages further along the road. Neither does it have a garden to the rear, only a small 'yard' area which is used for bin and cycle storage. There is no existing parking provision or room to provide any. Proposals: The application proposes the subdivision of the existing three bedroom dwelling into a pair of one bedroom flats – one on the ground floor and one at first floor. This would involve some internal reconfiguration, as well as modest external alterations to the rear elevation to provide a separate entrance door for the first floor unit. This is one of three concurrent applications, the other two being for conversion of the neighbouring commercial/retail units at ground floor level of No.72 New Road to two further flats. Policy & Principle: The application site lies within the urban edge where the basic principle of development is acceptable. However, any formal approval is dependent upon how well that proposed is considered to accord with the relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan. In this instance the most relevant policies are DM1, DM12, DM13 and DM14. Policy DM1 requires new development to be of a good quality and to take appropriate account of the site context and that of the surrounding area. It also requires development

to enhance the amenity of existing and future residents, to minimise impact upon neighbouring uses and occupiers and where necessary to provide appropriate mitigation.

Policy DM12 relates to heritage assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas. It requires development to ensure no adverse impact results to heritage assets, with the more significant the asset requiring a greater degree of protection.

Also of relevance are Policies DM13 and DM14 which relate to transport and parking. These policies are set out in more detail below.

In principle therefore, the subdivision of the current dwelling to form two flats is acceptable.

Layout, Scale, Design, Street Scene, Area Character & Heritage:

Externally the proposals would have a minimal impact, with the only visible changes being to the rear elevation. As such, there would be no obvious impact upon the street scene or visual amenity of the locality.

In terms of the proposal's impact upon the character of the locality and the wider conservation area, physically there would be little impact, given the minimal external alterations proposed. Whilst increasing the number of residential units, there would be no changes in planning use which cause any concerns. However, the increase in units and the need for parking associated with those new occupiers is a concern (see below).

Parking & Highways:

The application site lies very close to Netley's 'Station Road Local Centre' and has access to public transport including buses and trains, with a bus stop a short distance away and Netley Railway Station approximately a 10 – 15 minute walk away. Whilst the site does have the advantage of being very close to some potentially required facilities, more significant facilities such as the nearest doctors, dentists and supermarket are up to an hour's walk away.

In terms of trip rates, whilst the additional residential unit proposed may result in additional trips, it is unlikely that this would result in any noticeable difference to the present situation. However, this part of Netley can suffer from traffic congestion due to the level of on-street parking which occurs along Station Road, New Road and Victoria Road. This has been highlighted as the main concern of objectors and the parish council.

To comply with the Council's parking standards, between 2 and 4 parking spaces would need to be provided to serve the resulting development (additional spaces would also be required to serve the concurrent application for two flats at 72 New Road next door to the site). However, the site cannot provide any form of off-street parking. Whilst the sustainable location of the site could justify a lower than required provision, as was recently agreed at 22 Station Road (PN/24/97696), to provide zero parking in this instance is not considered acceptable.

The applicant has highlighted that the parking provision required for the proposed development is only slightly greater than that for the existing three bedroom property and that there are parking restrictions in the locality to prevent dangerous parking. However, they have provided no information as to whether the existing occupiers have a vehicle or where this is parked.

Whilst it is noted that there are parking restrictions around the New Road / Station Road crossroads, for the purposes of highway safety, there are no such restrictions in any neighbouring streets. As such, these streets regularly have a considerable level of on-street parking taking place along much of their length. Much of this is by local residents, whose Victorian properties have no option to provide off-street parking, as well as customers to the local shopping parade, and visitors to the nearby Royal Victoria Country Park.

Following the closure of the social club car park off New Road to the public, with the loss of 20+ spaces, there is only one public car park remaining to serve this part of Netley Abbey. Presently this car park can be used free of charge, and as such is very often full throughout the day and in the evenings where it is used by local residents.

Whilst no formal consultation with the Local Highway Authority was undertaken for this application, the were consulted on the recent prior notification application for 72 New Road, where they highlighted the existing parking situation in the locality as a concern. These concerns tally with the strong concerns raised by objectors to the application and are shared by the LPA.

In order to address these concerns, the applicant has undertaken a parking survey, which looked at available parking within a 200 metre radius of the site over two nights in December 2024 – Sunday 15th and Tuesday 17th. These surveys show that there is very limited on-street capacity within a reasonable walking distance of the site – i.e. 50 – 100 metres. This means that any additional parking is going to be reliant on the public car park in New Road, or the short-term parking outside the Co-op store opposite the site which is restricted to 30 minutes between 8am and 6pm. However, given the store opens late, loss of these spaces to resident parking in the evenings could impact business at the store, which as the anchor store for the Station Road Local Centre, raises concerns.

However, the main parking concern raised has been daytime parking which the survey did not record. Parking in and around this part of Netley has long been a problem and it has not been demonstrated that the proposed conversion of the existing dwelling into two flats will not result in harm to the locality in terms of parking matters, and in turn the amenity of the locality and existing residents. As such, the application is considered to be contrary to Policies DM1, DM13 and DM14 of the adopted Local Plan and will form the main reason for refusal.

Amenity:

Future Occupiers:

Internally, whilst both proposed flats exceed the minimum floor area requirements set out in Policy DM30, there are reservations as to the quality of some of the main habitable accommodation. For instance, the suggested living rooms for each flat are small and do not have the best of outlooks. This is particularly the case for the ground floor unit whose lounge is only 7.4 square metres and is lit by two small windows which currently serve a downstairs toilet and pantry/cupboard. Conversely, a cupboard for the first floor unit is served by a large main window. Although these issues cannot be used as a reason to refuse the application, it does appear to demonstrate a lack of thought as to the resulting quality of internal accommodation for future occupiers.

Externally the flats are served by a shared 'yard' to the rear of the building. However, this space will only really be suitable for bin and cycle storage and would be of little use as useable external amenity space. Given that it appears the garden behind this is within the control of the applicant (being outlined in blue on the submitted location plan), it is questioned why some of this space is not given over to occupiers of the proposed flats so that they can have an attractive and useable external amenity space. The Council's 'Quality Places' SPD sets out that flats should be provided with a minimum of 25 square metres of useable amenity space per flat (pages 30 & 31). This can be reduced where private balconies or terraces are provided, which is not the case in this instance. This lack of sufficient useable amenity space is considered to be contrary to Policy DM1 of the adopted Local Plan and the Quality Places SPD and will form a reason for refusal.

Existing Neighbours:

Due to the minimal nature of external works proposed and the resulting development remaining in residential use, it is not envisaged that there would be any impact upon the amenity of neighbouring occupiers in terms of loss of privacy, light or outlook. However, as set out above, there are concerns that the lack of parking to serve the development will result in increased pressure for surrounding roads, and in turn, residents of those streets, to the detriment of their amenity.

Nature Conservation:

As is set out in the Council Ecologist's response, the application is exempt from the requirement to provide a 10% biodiversity net gain due to being considered de-minimus for the purposes of the legislation. In terms of impact upon nature conservation, that proposed will have no adverse impact upon any local habitat and there is scope to provide a small improvement through the inclusion of the simple measures set out above. However, as that proposed would result in an increased number of residential units, there would be a wider impact as set out below.

Recreational disturbance

The site lies within the 13.8km catchment area for the New Forest Special Protection Area and within the 5.6km catchment area for the Solent Bird Aware Scheme. As such, mitigation is required for recreational disturbance upon the Solent and New Forest resulting from the development. The applicant can make use of the two relevant Council schemes. However, the necessary contributions have not been secured. As such, this will form part of a further reason for refusal.

Nutrients

Natural England have advised that the increase in wastewater from new housing developments within the borough is having a detrimental effect on the quality of water entering the Itchen and Solent catchment areas through nutrification. As such all developments for additional housing are required to reach nutrient neutrality (ensuring that development does not add to existing nutrient burdens), in order to meet the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The application site would use the Peel Common wastewater treatment works, which discharges into The Solent. As such the proposed development is required to achieve nutrient neutrality for nitrogen. Eastleigh Borough Council has a scheme which takes land out of agricultural uses and creates recreational spaces, thus reducing the nutrient output of the land. This scheme would be available to the applicant, although they have not confirmed if they intend to make use of this scheme or provide another form of mitigation. In either case, suitable mitigation can be secured by way of an appropriately worded planning condition were the application to be approved.

Habitats Regulations

Any proposed residential development in this area will have a likely impact upon The Solent SPAs. As such, an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations would need to be completed and forwarded to Natural England for comment were the application recommended for approval. However, as the application is to be recommended for refusal, no assessment has been undertaken, albeit the lack of securing appropriate mitigation will form a further reason for refusal should the planning application be appealed, thereby allowing the matter to be suitably addressed.

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 adopted local 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 local plan policy. The need to

support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted 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 ☒
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Whilst acceptable in basic principle terms, that proposed does raise a number of concerns in relation to the quality of environment created for future occupiers, both internally and externally. However, the main concern relates to the inability of the site to provide any form of parking provision to serve the resulting development. The supporting evidence provided by the applicant to address this is not considered to give the full picture of the existing situation both during the day and in the evenings. As such, the LPA are not assured that the additional on-street parking resulting from the proposed development will not result in further parking issues in the locality, to the detriment of neighbouring residents, businesses and the wider area. As such, the application is recommended for refusal for the following reasons.

1. Insufficient evidence has been provided to demonstrate the proposed subdivision of the existing dwelling to provide an additional residential unit will not result in increased parking pressures in the locality, impacting upon traffic movements, highway safety and to the detriment of the amenity of neighbouring residents and businesses. As such, the application is considered to be contrary to Policies DM1, DM13 and DM14 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016 – 2036 and the Council's 'Quality Places' and 'Residential Parking Standards' Supplementary Planning Documents.
2. The proposed development by virtue of the cramped and constrained size of the application site would not provide an appropriate quality private amenity space of a size and shape considered suitable to serve the development, to the detriment of the amenity of future occupiers. The application is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), as well as the Council's 'Quality Places' Supplementary Planning Document and the provisions of the NPPF.

3. The application fails to provide the required mitigation to offset the impacts of the development upon the European protected Solent Complex (SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites), and New Forest National Park (SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites) from additional recreational pressure and nitrogen loading generated by the population increase and additional sewage resulting from the development. The proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of Policies DM1, DM10 and DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036, the provisions of the NPPF (2023) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.