

REPORT SUMMARY
6th September 2018

REFERENCE NO - 18/501928/FULL			
APPLICATION PROPOSAL – Conversion of existing commercial and residential building together with single storey side extension, single storey rear extensions with a terrace above, to provide 7no. residential apartments.			
ADDRESS - Holman House, Station Road Staplehurst TN12 0QQ			
RECOMMENDATION - GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to conditions			
SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION - The proposal is acceptable in terms of design and no material harm will be caused to the character of the application property or the appearance, layout and character of the vicinity of the site. The proposal does not result in any material harm to the outlook or amenity of neighbouring occupiers or any significant highways safety concerns. It accords with all relevant policies of the development plan (Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2017) and the NPPF and will contribute towards the provision of smaller housing units within the village of Staplehurst.			
REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE – Staplehurst Parish Council have requested that the application is reported to the Planning Committee if Officers are minded to recommend approval.			
WARD Staplehurst	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Staplehurst	APPLICANT Arrant Land Ltd AGENT Blink Architecture	
DECISION DUE DATE 18/06/18	PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE 12/07/18	OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE 27/04/17	
RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY			
App No	Proposal	Decision	Date
17/506369/FULL	Conversion of existing commercial/residential building together with single storey side extension, single storey rear extension with storage above, changes to fenestration and addition to second floor extension to provide 7 residential apartments.	WDN	30.01.18
17/504258/FULL	Change of use and conversion of vacant business premises (offices B1) to residential (dwellinghouse C3)	PERMITTED	7.11.17
05/0519	Erection of a rear conservatory as shown on site location plan, roof plan and block plan.	PERMITTED	04.05.05
96/0704	Single storey rear extension	PERMITTED	08.07.96
97/1552	Change of use of the building from a mixed use for the purposes of retailing (A1) and residential uses to a mixed use for the purposes of office (B1) and residential uses together with the erection of a two and single storey rear extension to provide additional accommodation for the new use	PERMITTED	06.02.98

MAIN REPORT

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

- 1.01 The application site lies on the east side of Station Road (A229) and is occupied by a large detached property set back approximately 11 metres from the road. The property is located within the defined boundaries of the Rural Service Centre of Staplehurst as designated in the adopted Maidstone Local Plan (2017).
- 1.02 The vacant building on the application site provides a six bedroom house with part of the ground floor (79.5 square metres) in office use (Use Class B1)). The property has a large rear garden part of which is covered in an expanse of hardstanding and currently used for vehicle parking in connection with the B1 use. There is a row of single storey disused garages along the eastern boundary of the site.
- 1.04 Abutting the site to the north is a row of semi-detached two storey residential properties. To the south is the premises of Staplehurst Free Church that is occupied by a large detached building set back from Station Road and from the side boundary with the application site.
- 1.05 The general streetscene is fairly uniform comprising mainly of fairly large and medium sized detached and semi-detached properties. Front boundary treatments are generally formed of low well maintained hedges interspersed by some low level brick walls. The site has a 1.8 metre close boarded fence to the north and south boundary of the site. .
- 1.06 Access to the site is gained via an existing side access from Station Road (A229). A service lane runs outside the rear boundary of the site. Ground levels within the application site are generally flat.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.01 The proposal includes erection of a single storey side extension and a single storey rear extension with terrace above.
- 2.02 A single-storey side extension is proposed to the south facing flank of the application building to replace the existing small extension on that elevation. It would extend 9 metre across the south facing elevation and would have a width of 2.7 metres and set back by 0.2 metres from the front elevation. The height of this extension would be just under 4 metres from the ground level to the highest part of the mono-pitched roof which would be set down from the side of the building.
- 2.03 The application proposes to replace the existing single storey rear extension and conservatory with a slightly larger rear extension. This element is split in two parts, with the smaller flat roofed extension being of a similar scale to the existing rear projection. It would extend 4.5 metres from the rear elevation of the building and 6 metres across the width of the building. The terrace area provided above this rear projection has been removed in the amended scheme.
- 2.04 The larger rear single storey extension would have a width extending approximately 7 metres across the rear elevation with depths of 12.8 metres. It would have a height of 4.8 metres above ground level with eaves at 2.5 metres. This element would be covered in pitched tiled roof.

- 2.05 The ground floor would accommodate 2no. two bedroom apartments and 2no. one bedroom apartments. The two bedroom apartments would occupy a combined floor area of 145 square metres and would each have living room/kitchen and shower room. The one bedroom ground floor apartments would occupy a floor area of 105 square metres, with each accommodating a kitchen/living area and bathroom.
- 2.06 There would be three one bedroom apartments at first floor level each accommodating a living area/kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom with integral wardrobes.
- 2.07 The development would utilise the existing access which leads eastwards from Station Road (A229) to the rear part of the site. The plans indicates the provision of 9 car parking spaces and 7 cycle parking spaces for the development, with a grass create turning area provided for service vehicles to the front of the site.
- 2.08 The submission indicates removal of the existing chimney stack. The existing north facing first floor windows openings are to be glazed in obscure glass and the lower sash fixed shut. An acoustic panel fence with bamboo planted in front would be provided along the northern boundary to reduce the impact on the neighbouring property to the north of the site.
- 2.09 The proposal is a resubmission of planning application with reference number 17/506369/FULL which is for conversion of the existing commercial/residential building into 7 residential apartments which was withdrawn by the applicant. The previous application was withdrawn on the Council's advice to enable the applicant addressed design and amenity concerns. There has been further amendments to the current scheme is considered to overcome the Council's previous objections as discussed in more detail in the appraisal section of the report.

3.0 POLICY AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): Para 124, 128 and 130 of the NPPF National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):
Development Plan: Policy SS1, SP10, DM1, DM9 and DM23 of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017).

4.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.01 **Local Residents:** 11 representations received from local residents and Staplehurst Free Church raising the following (summarised) issues:
- Adverse impact from over intensification of development at the site
 - Deliberate omission of the rear part of the site from the proposed scheme
 - Loss of privacy for neighbours
 - Inadequate parking provision
 - Access unsuitable for large vehicles
 - Division of application building not in keeping with neighbouring properties.
 - Inadequate amenity space for future residents
 - Adverse amenity impacts from the creation of rear access for the site.

4.02 Staplehurst Parish Council have raised objections to the application and requested that the application is reported to the Planning Committee if officers minded to recommend approval.

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

5.01 **KCC Highways and Transport:** No objections subject the submission of a construction management plan and permanent retention of vehicle and cycle parking spaces.

5.02 **Environmental Health Team:** No objections

6.0 APPRAISAL

Main Issues

6.01 The proposal relates to the extension and conversion of the building into 7 self contained 1 and 2 bed apartments. Therefore, the main issues for consideration are:

- Principle of development
- Visual impact
- Residential amenity
- Parking and Highway Safety

6.02 Policy SS1 of the adopted local plan directs new development to the most sustainable areas of the borough where employment, key services and facilities together with a range of transport choices are available. As a defined rural service centre Staplehurst is second in the sustainable hierarchy behind only Maidstone urban area as set out in policy SS1 of the adopted local plan.. Policy SP10 of the adopted local plans sets out the strategic vision for sustainable growth within the village of Staplehurst.

6.03 Staplehurst as a rural service centre benefits from a number of facilities including a direct bus service to Maidstone Town Centre, a railway station, primary school, a parade of shops, petrol filling station, library and a public house. The application site is in a highly sustainable location with good access to public transport and where goods, services, facilities can be easily accessed without the use of a private motor vehicle, and as a result the principle of increased residential density in this location is fully supported by the NPPF and the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

6.04 Moreover, the application site lies within the settlement boundary of Staplehurst where residential extensions and conversion of existing building into flats are permissible subject to requirements set out in policy DM1, DM9 and DM23 of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017) being met. The outlined policies seek to ensure that all residential extensions and conversion provides acceptable residential environment and respects the amenities of neighbouring residents.

6.05 Taking the relevant provision of the policies set out above in turns, policy DM1 of the adopted local plan emphasises the Council's objectives of achieving high quality design throughout the borough. The policy also requires that proposals respect the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties and uses whilst providing adequate residential amenities for future occupiers. The submitted scheme is considered to comply with the relevant provisions of policy DM1 and is considered acceptable as a consequence.

- 6.06 Policy DM9 of the adopted local plan states that proposals for the conversion or redevelopment of dwellings into self contained flats would be permitted if 'the intensified use of the building and its curtilage would not significantly harm the appearance of the building or the character and amenity of the surrounding area'. As discussed in more detail in the appraisal section of this report, the scale and design of the extensions proposed to the application property are acceptable and there would be no material harm to the general character of the street scene or amenities of the surrounding area.
- 6.07 Having regards to the relevant provision in the adopted Local Plan and government guidance in paragraph 124 and 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework – NPPF, it is considered that this application involving the redevelopment of the application building into 7no. self contained flats is acceptable in principle and there are no overriding policy considerations to indicate a refusal of planning permission.

Visual Impact:

- 6.08 Policy DM1 of the adopted local plan states that residential extensions should respect the form, proportions, symmetry and detail of the original building without compromising the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
- 6.09 The proposed single storey addition to the southern (side) building elevation and adjacent to Staplehurst Free Church of the building is of appropriate scale and design, it would not appear over dominant or visually harmful and seen as a sensitive addition to the application property. No overriding planning objections would be raised to this aspect of the application.
- 6.10 The flat roofed element of the rear extension would replace the existing rear projection. The larger rear projection would retain a separating distance of approximately 2 metres with the common boundary of premises of Staplehurst Free Church, which is to the south of the site. These elements of the application would have restricted views from within Station Road and whilst an angled view of the larger rear extension can be gained from the grounds of Staplehurst Free Church, it would not appear over dominant or visually harmful within its surroundings.
- 6.11 The issues raised in the Council's objection to the previous application mainly relates to the design and proportions of additions proposed and their visual impact on the character of the area and amenity of neighbouring occupiers. The additions in the current proposal are considerably modest in relation to the previous scheme in terms of their design and scale and considered acceptable.
- 6.12 In summary the proposed additions to the property are of a modest scale and appropriately designed. As such they would not appear of excessive bulk and massing and are a sensitive addition to the existing property. The proposal satisfies all the relevant requirements of policy DM1 and DM9 of the adopted local plan, and the NPPF.

Residential Amenity:

- 6.13 Policy DM1 of the adopted local plan (2017) requires that proposals are assessed in terms of the level of amenity they provide for future occupants and the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties.
- 6.14 The apartments would provide acceptable internal floor space compliant with national space standards for future occupants. Similarly, the outdoor amenity space although

small is of useable proportions when considering that the apartments are unlikely to provide family housing due to their sizes and therefore unlikely to be occupied by large families.

- 6.15 A north facing window opening is shown on the submitted plan with reference number P03 to be obscure glazed with the lower sash fixed shut. This is an existing window opening and the obscure glazing proposed would ensure the amenities of occupiers of the neighbouring property to the north of the site are protected.
- 6.16 The proposed first floor terrace area above the rear projection has been removed in design amendments submitted to the Council, therefore, there are no unacceptable impacts on amenities of occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling to the north of the site in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy.
- 6.17 The distance between this proposed extension and the Staplehurst Free Church building would be just over four metres. After considering the location, scale and design of the extension, it is found that there would be no unacceptable impact on this building in terms of overshadowing, overlooking, loss of light or outlook.
- 6.18 The Environmental Health Team has confirmed that after considering the proposal they have no objection in relation to vehicle movements along the access road in terms of disturbance to either existing neighbours or future occupants. Any potential nuisance would be mitigated by the proposed acoustic fencing. The development is acceptable in relation to residential amenity.

Parking and Highway Safety:

- 6.19 The submitted plans indicate provision of nine car parking spaces and 7 cycle parking spaces for the proposed development which is compliant with the requirements set out in policy DM23 of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017).
- 6.20 Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts are severe. It is proposed to use the existing access onto the A229 (Station Road) which has good sightlines in both directions.
- 6.21 The existing B1 use of the application premises is estimated to generate trips significantly above the levels expected from the currently proposed residential use of the building. The local road network is capable of accommodating the level of vehicle trips generated from the proposed development.
- 6.22 KCC Highways have confirmed the anticipated amount of traffic that would be generated by the development is not considered to be severe. Therefore, no overriding planning objection can be raised on highways safety grounds.

Biodiversity:

- 6.23 There are opportunities to incorporate biodiversity enhancements within this development in line with requirements of the development plan, and the NPPF. It is noted that the submitted plans do not indicate any design features to provide roosting and nesting opportunities for wildlife. It is considered necessary to append a condition requiring incorporation of biodiversity measures like swift bricks within the scheme.

Other Matters

- 6.24 It is recommended that a condition requiring submission of details of renewable or low-carbon sources of energy for the development is appended to the grant of planning permission.
- 6.25 Comments have been received objecting to the application on the grounds that the rear part of the site have been deliberately omitted and would likely be used in future for further residential development. This concern is addressed in design amendments. Any future development at the site would require the submission of a further application for planning permission which would be assessed against relevant provisions of the development plan and the NPPF.
- 6.26 Further comments state that the applicant is intending to create a rear access for the site onto the service lane running along the rear boundary of the site. There is no indication of a rear access being created for the rear part of the site as part of this current scheme. Any future application to create a rear access would be subject a assessment in consultation with KCC Highways

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.01 Having assessed the application against the relevant provisions of the development plan (Maidstone Borough Local Plan, 2017), and the NPPF, I conclude that there are no significant adverse impacts on the character, appearance and visual amenity of the locality generally resulting from the proposed development. The extensions and conversion of the building do not result in any significant adverse impacts upon the amenities of the occupiers of neighbouring residential properties.
- 7.02 Due consideration have been given to the likely impacts of the development upon the occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling to the north of the site and I am satisfied that there are no impacts so detrimental as to indicate a refusal of planning permission. The proposals are not considered to raise any overriding parking or highway safety issues. In the circumstances, I recommend that this application is approved subject to appropriate conditions.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

GRANT planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission;

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans/drawings
P02 and PO3 received on 09.04.2018; and
PO4 Rev B received on 15.05.2018

Reason: To ensure the quality of the development is maintained and to prevent harm to the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external work to the building hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building and include swift bricks and sparrow boxes incorporated into the development ;

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and in the interest of biodiversity.

4. Before the development hereby permitted is first occupied, the first floor windows opening on the northern elevation of the existing building (as shown on drawing number P03) shall be obscure glazed and shall be incapable of being opened except for a high level fanlight opening of at least 1.7m above inside floor level and shall subsequently be maintained as such:

Reason: To safeguard the privacy of existing and prospective occupiers.

5. No development above slab level shall take place until details of how decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources of energy will be incorporated into the development hereby approved, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved details shall be installed prior to first occupation and maintained thereafter;

Reason: To ensure an energy efficient form of development. Details are required prior to commencements as these methods may impact or influence the overall appearance of development.

6. The approved details of the parking/turning areas shall be completed before the commencement of the use of apartments hereby permitted and shall thereafter be kept available for such use. No development, whether permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order, with or without modification) or not, shall be carried out on the areas indicated or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to them;

Reason: Development without adequate parking/turning provision is likely to lead to parking inconvenient to other road users and in the interests of road safety.

7. The development hereby approved shall not commence above slab level until details of a minimum of 2 publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points, including a programme for their installation, maintenance and management, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The electric vehicle charging points as approved shall be installed prior to occupation of the building hereby permitted and shall thereafter be retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To promote the reduction of CO2 emissions through the use of low emissions vehicles in accordance with paragraph 35 of the NPPF.

8. The development shall not be occupied until details of hard landscape works which shall include the use of permeable paving upon the access and hardstanding parking areas indicated on the approved plans, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details before first occupation of the apartment;

Reason: To ensure satisfactory appearance to the development and in the interest of sustainable water drainage.

9. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2015 (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), any development that falls within Schedule 2, Part 1, Class A, or any erection of outbuildings, boundary treatments or laying of hardstanding shall be carried out without the permission of the Local Planning Authority;

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the development and the enjoyment of their properties by prospective occupiers.

10. No development shall take place until details of on site parking and turning for all construction traffic have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The details shall be implemented before construction commences and retained until the completion of the construction.

Reason: To ensure adequate on site parking and turning provision is made for construction traffic in the interest of highway safety and the free flow of traffic.

11. Prior to the occupation of the apartments, details of acoustic fencing along the northern boundary of the site to protect the neighbouring site against transmission of both airborne and impact sound shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and the approved scheme shall be completed before first occupation of any dwelling and shall be maintained thereafter.

Reason: To mitigate the effects of potential noise nuisance.

12. No external lighting shall be installed at the site without details having been first submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: To protect the night-time rural environment in the interest of visual amenity.

13. Before the development hereby approved commences a detailed landscaping scheme for the outdoor amenity areas indicated on the submitted plans shall be submitted for prior approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. It shall include details of native species planting to complement any existing landscaping within the site. The approved landscaping shall be planted in the first available planting season. Any part of the approved native planting becoming dead, dying or diseased within 5 years of planting shall be replaced with a similar species of a size to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and shall be retained at all times in accordance with the terms of this condition.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

INFORMATIVES

1. The applicant is advised that in order to avoid nuisance to neighbours they should seek to only use plant and machinery used for demolition and construction between 0800 hours and 1900 hours on Mondays to Fridays and between 0800 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sunday and Bank Holidays.

2. The applicant is advised that in order to avoid nuisance to neighbours they should seek to allow vehicles to arrive, depart, be loaded or unloaded within the general site between the hours of 0800 hours and 1900 Mondays to Fridays and 0800 to 1300 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Case Officer: Francis Amekor

NB: For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website.