

Application Number

P/2011/0906

Site Address1 Fortescue Road
Paignton
Devon
TQ3 2DA**Case Officer**

Mr Scott Jones

Ward

Preston

Description

Alterations, extensions and conversion to former doctors surgery to form 6 apartments

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

The proposal offers the conversion of an empty doctors surgery to provide six residential flats. The principle of a residential conversion is acceptable due to the location of the site at the entrance to a residential road, its proximity to facilities/services and good public transport links. It is also inherently suitable for a residential conversion because it was originally built as a house and has only recently been converted to commercial use.

The physical alterations sought have been amended to those initially outlined and the scheme is now supported as there are only minor amendments to the form.

The size and mix of one and two bedroom units is acceptable and, if they are supported by suitable cycle and waste storage facilities, the general plot arrangement is considered adequate. The lack of car parking is considered acceptable within the context of there being excellent proximity to facilities, services and public transport links and on-street parking available in the area. The absence of car spaces alone is not considered a compelling reason to oppose the scheme, certainly in light of the fact that the previous use as a doctor's surgery would have been a higher trip generator than the proposed use.

The proposal was considered at a recent Site Review Meeting where the Officer's recommendation was one of approval. However, that meeting referred the application to Committee for resolution. Officer's recommendation remains as an approval.

Recommendation

Approval; Subject to conditions in regard to detail on cycle parking and waste storage to be agreed by officers, and the signing of a s106 legal agreement to secure planning contributions inline with the Council policy document *Planning*

and Affordable Housing: Priorities and Delivery SPD.

Site Details

The site is a prominent corner plot on the junction of Torbay Road with Fortescue Road, which holds a fairly substantial two-storey building that lies empty but was previously used as a doctors surgery. The building has a painted render finish, white casement windows and a dual-gabled pitched roof form with rear flat-roofed extensions that help offer a degree of space within the roof. There is a small degree of outside space to the front and sides of the plot.

In terms of land designation the plot sits within the wider Preston District Centre, which is a linear shopping area that loosely follows this area of Torbay Road.

Detailed Proposals

The proposal is for the alteration, extension and conversion of this former doctors surgery to provide six flats.

The alterations to the building are limited to the addition of two roof-lights in the gables of the roof, the render infill and the provision of a window within a large glazed section within the lower-ground floor off Torbay Road, and the addition of third floor windows set in the gable features.

The extension of the building is solely at roof level, offered through the infill and provision of a flat-roofed structure in the central valley area between the two gables, which hips down to the eaves to offer a pitched finish; the provision of a flat-roofed dormer adjacent to the existing area of flat roof to the side of the building facing Carlton Court; and, the provision of a small pitched dormer fronting Torbay Road.

The proposal seeks permission for the conversion of the building into six flats, arranged with two units on each floor, which are accessed through front and side entranceways. The flats offered are a mix of one and two-bed units, to a scale range between 51m² to 114m² in floor area.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

Highways Authority: Raise no objection to the proposed use, because of the location and previous use as a doctors surgery.

Strategic Transportation: Notes that the site is within close proximity to local facilities with good public transport provision and a cycle route propose adjacent. It is considered that the lack of car parking can be overcome by promoting the development as particularly attractive to those without a car. Methods can include bus pass provision and/or cycle vouchers for occupants. It is also agreed that the proposed use would generate less traffic than the previous use, (which is helpful when considering the issues). The SPD should be applied and monies for transport improvements sought if applicable. Cycle parking should be

provided and there is no clear indication or understanding of any proposed supply.

Natural Environment Services: Suggests that a greenspace and recreation contribution should be sought as a Planning Obligation for improvements at Hollicombe Gardens or the woodland area behind the old gas works..

Summary Of Representations

Four representations have been received that oppose the scheme, which detail the following concerns:

- Overdevelopment
- The building would suit less units
- The proposal would worsen the existing parking pressures that are currently experienced due to restricted parking and parking pressures from shoppers etc
- Insufficient space for cycle parking and waste storage
- Local cycling facilities are not good

These are re-produced at Page P.200.

Relevant Planning History

Residential conversion of the building has been broadly supported at pre-application stage.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

The key issues are considered to be; 1) the principle of residential use, 2) the suitability of the residential environments proposed, 3) the visual implications of the scheme, 4) the likely implications upon neighbour amenity and, 5) highway matters.

1) Principle and Planning Policy -

Although the site lies within a designated District Shopping Area the building actually addresses and relates more strongly with the residential side road that it frames. This relationship, which is chiefly defined through the orientation of the building, is also strengthened by the domestic residential character of the building. On this basis, the proposal for residential use is considered appropriate as it would sit comfortably alongside the dwelling and flat uses established within Fortescue Road, whilst not overtly offering any clear potential to undermine the wider function, desirability, or character, of the district shopping centre. A residential use is considered one that is appropriate for a building that inherently expresses a residential character and sits at the head of a residential side road. No. 1 Fortescue Road was originally built and used as a residential property. With regard to the proposal for flats as opposed to a single dwelling house, the area is not characterised by individual dwellings set within their own plots and so there is a general acceptance of sub-division.

2) Quality of residential environment -

The proposal provides six units, two on each floor, with floor sizes varying from 51m² to 114m². The proposed flats offer either one or two bedrooms supported by wider living space (living space, kitchen space, bathrooms etc). Each unit appears supported by good levels of natural light and appropriate access arrangements. It is considered that the living units offer an acceptable standard of living space and, if supported by suitable communal waste storage and cycle parking facilities, then the scheme would be an acceptable form of development in terms of the number of units proposed.

3) Visual implications -

Through officer negotiation, the physical changes proposed to the building have been reduced. They are now limited to small pockets of roof alterations, some of which would be largely obscured from public view, and minor elevation changes to add or alter windows. The alterations are considered relatively minor and are considered acceptable when bearing in mind the current form of the building and its local context. The amendments are deemed acceptable as there would be little actual change to the overriding character and appearance of the building. It is suggested that cycle parking and waste storage details are submitted to the Authority prior to commencement via planning conditions, which will offer the ability to assess the suitability, location, form and prominence within the streetscene of these structures/facilities .

4) Local amenity -

With little in the way of additional bulk to the building it is considered that there would be no loss of light or outlook to neighbouring properties.

Additional windows and rooflights are proposed but their size and orientation offers little concern that privacy would be affected by any resultant overlooking.

In light of the limited external changes it is considered the amenity afforded neighbouring occupiers will remain largely unaltered.

5) Highway matters -

The scheme proposes six flats in place of a doctors surgery on a site that sits at the head of a residential side road within a district shopping centre. In terms of associated facilities, the plot is restricted and offers no potential for on-street parking, although there would appear scope for cycle spaces. It is hence clear that vehicle movements resulting from the proposed use, as with those generated by the former use, can only be served by on-street parking in the area.

Highway advice affirms that the previous use is considered a greater generator of vehicle movements than the proposed use. They hence do not object to the scheme being offered without private parking as the premise is that there would be a net reduction in the level of traffic to and from the site. Notwithstanding the

observation on the expected levels of movement, support for the scheme without parking would appear furthered by the sustainable location of the site near to shops, services, facilities and excellent transport links. It is therefore considered that the scheme could offer conveniently located flats that would not isolate the sections of society who do not wish to own a car or do not have the opportunity to own a car.

There is obviously some local concern that the proposed use could exacerbate local parking pressures. However it is concluded that any form of use would create a degree of pressure upon the level of street parking available, but the property has to have an acceptable use. When considering the comments of the Highways Authority, the broader picture would appear to suggest that the current proposal offers an acceptable use. The future levels of car ownership of occupiers is indeterminable, however the local context of its central location and good access links, potentially with the perceived issues on there being limited street parking, could themselves determine the choices of future occupiers. The over-riding consideration is, however, that the previous use was a higher vehicle trip generator than that proposed. The proposal would therefore technically improve the parking situation.

S106/CIL -

The proposal is liable for a Planning Obligation under s106 of the Act in order to offset costs that would arise from the development. The former doctors surgery had a floor area of 470 sq. m. and consideration should be given to the net additional impact of the proposal for six residential flats. The proposed flats would fit into the following categories for financial contributions as defined by the 'Planning contributions and affordable housing S.P.D.' (update 3, April 2011) - 1@45-54m², 2@55-74m², 1@75-94m² and 2@95-119m².

There is established need for contributions towards primary education, greenspace/recreation, lifelong learning and waste/recycling. As the previous use is considered to generate a greater level of trip generation sustainable transport contributions are not sought. On this basis, the financial contributions triggered by this proposal are as follows;

Greenspace & Recreation:	£9580.00
Education:	£4130.00
Lifelong Learning:	£1720.00
Waste & Recycling:	£ 300.00

Total: £15,730.00 + legal fees

Should the applicant wish to provide payment upfront the figure would attract a 5% discount and would not attract any legal fees.

Conclusions

The principle of the conversion of the building into residential flats is considered acceptable in respect of the location of the property and the form and character of the building in question. The physical alterations sought have been amended to that initially submitted and they are now supported by officers. The scale of the units is satisfactory, with a mix of one and two bedroom flats, and if they are supported by suitable cycle and waste storage facilities the arrangement is considered to be acceptable. The lack of car parking is not considered a reason that could by itself be used to refuse the proposal. This is because the previous use would have had a higher vehicle trip generation and thus a higher deficit of off-street parking spaces to standard.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

01. Prior to the commencement of development details of the proposals for safe and secure covered cycle spaces shall be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall then remain permanently in place to serve the development at all times thereafter.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the area and ensure the provision of acceptable supporting facilities for the development, in accordance with Policies BES, BE1, T1, T2, and T3 of the Saved Adopted Torbay Local Plan (1995-2011).

02. Prior to the commencement of development details of covered bin storage facilities to serve the six units shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall then remain permanently in place to serve the development at all times thereafter.

Reason: To protect the amenities of the area and ensure the provision of acceptable supporting facilities for the development, in accordance with Policies BES, BE1 and W7 of the Saved Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011.

Relevant Policies

BES	Built environment strategy
BE1	Design of new development
HS	Housing Strategy
H4	Conversion and sub-division into flats
H9	Layout, and design and community aspects
H15	House extensions
W7	Development and waste recycling facilities
CF6	Community infrastructure contributions
CF7	Educational contributions
T25	Car parking in new development
S9	District Centres