

**APPLICATION REPORT - FUL/346850/21**  
**Planning Committee: 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Registration Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021  
**Ward:** Alexandra

**Application Reference:** FUL/346850/21  
**Type of Application:** Full application

**Proposal:** Change of use of the former scout/guide hall (Use Class F2(b)) to one 5 bed HMO and one 6 bed HMO and landscaping and associated infrastructure.

**Location:** Baden Powell Centre, 12 Glodwick, Oldham, OL4 1AH

**Case Officer:** Osian Perks  
**Applicant:** Mr Wainwright  
**Agent:** Mrs Carol Clarke

## **INTRODUCTION**

This planning application is referred to Planning Committee at the request of Councillor Salamat who has raised concerns relating to insufficient on-street car parking spaces being available to residents of the proposed development due to the high demand already placed upon such provision by existing residents and an MOT centre/garage on the opposite side of Brompton Street.

## **THE SITE**

The application site comprises a detached two storey building located on a corner plot created by the junction of Glodwick Road and Brompton Street. The principal elevation of the building faces Glodwick Road. The building includes a large single storey outrigger to the rear the side elevation of which fronts on to Brompton Street. It has a small area of green space within its curtilage which is currently overgrown and enclosed by palisade fencing.

The building is currently vacant but was last occupied as a scout/girl guides community use.

Directly facing the site, fronting Brompton Street is an MOT centre/garage. The remainder of Brompton Street is categorised predominantly by red brick, terraced, residential properties lining the highway. Adjacent to the site, fronting Glodwick Road and Waterloo Street, are a group of buildings currently in retail use.

## **THE PROPOSAL**

Planning permission was originally sought for the use of the building to provide:

- 3 x self contained studio flats;
- 1 x 3-bed House in Multiple Occupation (HMO); and,
- 1 x 5-bed House in Multiple Occupation (HMO).

However, following the consideration of the application, it has been amended and now proposes:

- 1 x 5-bed House in Multiple Occupation; and,
- 1 x 6-bed House in Multiple Occupation.

The proposed 5-bed HMO would be accommodated within the single storey outrigger whilst the 6-bed HMO would be located in the two-storey part of the building.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES**

The 'Development Plan' is the Joint Development Plan Document (DPD) which forms part of the Local Development Framework for Oldham.

The following policies are relevant to the determination of this application:

Policy 1 - Climate Change and Sustainable Development;  
Policy 2 – Communities;  
Policy 3 - An Address of Choice;  
Policy 5 - Promoting Accessibility and Sustainable Transport Choices;  
Policy 9 - Local Environment;  
Policy 11 – Housing; and,  
Policy 20 – Design.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Highways – The car ownership rates for houses of multiple occupation are generally expected to be low. The site is in a sustainable location within an established residential area with access to a range of local amenities. There are no dedicated car parking facilities proposed and any future resident and their visitors will be required to find a safe and legal place to park in the same way as any other resident/visitor in the area. A condition is suggested necessary to ensure that safe, usable cycle storage facilities are provided for the residents of the proposed accommodation.

It is not expected there will be any significant additional generation of traffic as a result of the proposed development. As such, the highway engineer raises no objection to the planning application on highway safety grounds.

Environmental Health – No objection

Tree Officer – No objection

Drainage – No comments received.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

Neighbour notification letters were sent to the residents of nearby properties and a site notice was erected outside the site. In response, 41no. representations have been received raising the following (summarised) comments:

- There is a shortage of on-street parking space with residents needing to park a considerable distance from their homes. The development will result in an increased demand for parking spaces
- Vehicles on the street are sometimes damaged and there are incidents of anti-social behaviour. This will be exacerbated by proposed development.
- Some residents feel they have not been consulted correctly and should have received a letter.
- The change of use from a community centre to a HMO is not appropriate.
- The development will result in further noise and fume pollution.
- Having HMOs so close to nearby schools is not safe.
- The site is not well connected to local amenities.
- Residents of the development may not have access to adjacent the alley gate or may leave it open.
- There is no vehicular access to the site via Brompton Street.
- No arboricultural method statement was submitted with the application.
- The noise assessment was carried out during the covid-19 lockdown and is therefore likely to be inaccurate.
- Bin storage and collection has not been appropriately looked at.
- The proposal does not address existing littering/fly-tipping issues.
- The site and the alleyway adjacent are used by children and nearby residents.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

The main issues to consider are:

1. Whether the principal of the development is acceptable;
2. The impact on residential amenity;
3. The design and appearance of the proposed extensions; and,
4. Highway safety (including car parking).

### **Principle of Development**

Having regard to Policy 2 of the Oldham Local Plan, the former use of the building as a scout/girl guides base is regarded as a community facility. Although the loss of a community facility must weigh against the scheme it must be acknowledged that the building is currently vacant and that the supporting text to Policy 2 makes provision for this where the proposal would achieve broader planning objectives.

Any vacant building has the potential to cause negative environmental and social impacts for local communities and prolonged harm to the character of an area. The active and sustainable use of any building helps to ensure its upkeep. This application seeks approval to use the building to accommodate Houses in Multiple Occupation which would increase the level of choice of residential accommodation in the area.

Whilst the proposals would result in the loss of a (former) community use there are plentiful other community uses in the vicinity including Barley Clough Medical Centre, Glodwick Primary Care Centre, Glodwick Pool, Glodwick Infant and Nursery School, Pitt Street Mosque, and Alexandra Park. There is no shortage of community facilities in the surrounding area but, irrespective of this, the extent of the harm caused by the loss of a potential community use is considered to be outweighed by the benefits associated with providing the type of residential accommodation proposed. As such, there is no conflict with the overarching aims and objectives of Policy 2.

Local Plan Policies 1, 3 and 5 aim to guide development to the most accessible locations and promote and encourage sustainable transport methods.

Policy 1 seeks to ensure the effective and efficient use of land and buildings by promoting the re-use and conversion of existing buildings and development on previously developed land. It also aims to ensure developments are sited within sustainable and accessible areas within the built-up area.

Policy 3 of the Local Plan stipulates that minor residential development should have access to at least two key services. As a guide, 'access' is defined within the policy as being '*within approximately 480 metres or approximately ten minutes' walk time of a key service.*' Key services include areas of employment, major retail centres (such as Oldham Town Centre, the borough's other centres and large-scale foodstores), local shopping parades, health-related facilities and services (such as doctors' surgeries and hospitals), secondary schools, primary schools, post offices and community uses (such as libraries, theatres). As noted above, the site is located in close proximity to a number of community uses which are regarded as key services having regard to this policy.

Policy 5 states that as a minimum, new minor development should achieve '*low accessibility*' which is defined as being within approximately 400 metres of a bus route with a service, or combination of services. The proposed development is within close proximity to multiple bus routes running along Glodwick Road and therefore meets this criteria.

In summary, it is considered that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable.

### **Residential Amenity**

Policy 9 seeks to protect the amenities of the occupants of residential properties by ensuring adequate outlook, levels of natural light and privacy.

Extensions are not proposed as part of this development and as such it is not considered that it would have an oppressive impact upon or cause an unacceptable loss of light to the occupants of neighbouring dwellings. By virtue of their siting, it is not considered that the additional window and door openings proposed would cause an unacceptable loss of privacy to the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

Each bedroom and living area proposed is considered to be of sufficient size for use by future occupants and the garden area is of a size considered suitable to ensure that occupants receive a standard of amenity higher than typical for a development of this type.

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposal would accord with the residential amenity aim of Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

### **Design & Appearance**

Policy 9 states that it is necessary to consider how a proposed development impacts on the visual appearance of the existing building. Policy 20 requires such proposals to respond positively to the environment, contribute to a distinctive sense of place, and make a positive contribution to the street scene.

The proposed alterations are modest in scale and nature and are not considered to have an adverse impact upon the existing character of the application property or that of the wider area. As such, the proposal would accord with the visual amenity aims of Policies 9 and 20 of the Oldham Local Plan.

### **Highways**

Policy 9 indicates that development should protect and improve local environmental quality and amenity by ensuring that development will minimise traffic levels and does not harm the safety of road users. However, consideration must also be afforded to paragraph 111 within the National Planning Policy Framework which states:

*“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.”*

Concern has been raised with regard to the lack of parking provision on Brompton Street and the increase in demand for parking spaces following the proposed conversion of the building. In accordance with the comments received by the Highways Officer, it is considered that the site is located in a sustainable location, near local amenities and close to public transport routes. It is also considered that by virtue of its scale, the development would not cause a significant level of additional traffic, and cycle parking is proposed on site with details to be secured via the imposition of a condition which is attached to the recommendation.

Following the amendments to the proposal (omitting 3no. self-contained units but keeping the total number of bedrooms unchanged (11 split across two HMOs)), the applicant's highways consultant (Axis) amended their appraisal of the car parking provision (Highways Technical Note) report. The update explains that car ownership amongst HMO occupiers is generally less than the occupiers of apartments and that the revised scheme is expected to generate less parking demand than would be generated by the lawful use of the building (if occupied).

In light of the above, it is not considered that the impact of the development upon the road network would be severe or that impact upon highway safety would be unacceptable. As such, it is considered that the application would satisfy paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

## **CONCLUSION**

The benefits associated with the permanent and active use of the building, and the provision of additional choice of residential accommodation in the area, must be regarded as material planning considerations in support of the proposal. This must then be balanced against harm which arises from the loss of potential for the building to accommodate another community use. However, given there are a number of other community uses in the surrounding area it is considered that this harm is outweighed by the benefits.

It is acknowledged there is no dedicated car parking provision for future residents. However, the site is in a highly sustainable location in respect of key services and public transport options, and car ownership amongst those residing in HMO accommodation is often low. Although there is high demand for on-street car parking in the surrounding area it is not considered the proposals would result in a severe impact on highway safety (i.e. the key test set out in the National Planning Policy Framework). Furthermore, it must also be acknowledged that whilst the building is currently vacant, it could be occupied by another community use potentially creating higher demand for parking provision than the use which is now proposed.

As such, subject to the imposition of conditions listed below, it is concluded that the proposals are acceptable having regard to the policies, guidance, and other considerations referenced in this report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Planning Committee resolves to grant permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiry of THREE years beginning with the date of this permission.

REASON - To comply with the provisions of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby approved shall be fully implemented in accordance with the Approved Details Schedule list on this decision notice.

REASON - For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and specifications.

3. The use of the building hereby approved shall not commence until a scheme for the provision of secure cycle parking has been implemented in accordance with details which shall have previously been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved facility shall remain available for users of the development thereafter.

REASON - In order to promote sustainable means of travel having regard to Policies 5 and 9 of the Oldham Local Plan.

4. No development comprising the erection of any external walls or surfacing shall take place until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development, including the roof, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The materials to be used throughout the development shall be consistent in terms of colour, size and texture with the approved details.

REASON - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable in the interests of the visual amenity of the area having regard to Policy 20 of the Oldham Local Plan.

**SITE LOCATION PLAN (NOT TO SCALE)**

